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A BOOK OF MODERN PRAYERS

A Book of MODERN PRAYERS

A Collection of Prayers and Readings by Modern Writers, with an Introductory Essay on the Meaning and Value of Prayer
Compiled and Edited by

SAMUEL McCOMB, D.D.

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To

ELLEN AYER WOOD

A Believer in the Spiritual World
and
A Lover of All Good Causes

Prefatory Note

The increasing demand for reality in religion is showing itself in a new sense of the significance and value of prayer. Each age must discover the secret of prayer for itself. The prayers of a distant past will not meet the needs of the present. The way in which men think and the language in which they express their thoughts will of necessity be reflected in their prayers. Hence the need for books such as the present one. The editor hopes also that it may be found useful in small groups which meet together in private houses as well as in churches for the practice of the art of prayer. With a few slight changes the prayers can be adapted for either public or personal use.

The editor's thanks are due the Rev. John W. Suter, D.D., for the correct form of the prayer xlii which is one of Cardinal Newman's most beautiful utterances; and for several valuable suggestions. The prayer (lx) usually called "Gladstone's Prayer" has for

its real author the Rev. William Griffiths, sometime rector of Shelsley Beauchamp (Eng.). A part of the introductory essay has appeared in the *Contemporary Review* in an article on "The Renaissance of Prayer." The editors and publishers are thanked for their kind permission to make use of it here.

Any suggestions with a view to making this book more adequate to the purpose for which it is sent forth will be gratefully received by Editor and publishers.

Acknowledgments

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Sacrament of Common Life; Harcourt, Brace and Co., for a passage from a sermon by Dr. J. F. Newton in *Best Sermons 1924;* The Century Co., for an extract from *Life and Letters of Dr. Huntington;* Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner and Co., for a prayer from George Dawson's *Book of Prayers;* The Very Rev. L. M. Watt, D.D., for an extract from his *By Still Waters;* T. and T. Clark for extracts from G. Watkin's *Knowledge of God,* and W. S. Bruce's *Formation of Christian Character;* G. H. Doran Co. and Sir Oliver Lodge for a passage from *The Making of Man,* and to the same publishers for extracts from W. S. Palmer's *Christianity and Christ,* J. Y. Simpson's *Man and the Attainment of Immortality,* and L. P. Jacks' *The Lost Radiance of the Christian Religion;* The Macmillan Co. for extracts from *Concerning Prayer* by B. H. Streeter and others, *The Spiritual Drama* by A. L. Sears, Bishop B. F. Westcott's *Prayers for Family Use,* W. H. Moberley's essay in *Foundations;* V. R. Gibson's *The Faith that Overcomes the World;* Mr. Colin Clements for two prayers from his *A Book of Prayers for Boys;* G. P. Putnam's Sons (New York and London), for an extract from A. C. Benson's *From a College Window;* T. N. Foulis (Edinburgh) for a passage from J. H. Oldham's *Possibilities of Prayer;* Oxford University Press for two prayers from Dr. W. E. Orchard's *Divine*

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PRAYER: ITS MEANING AND VALUE

ONE of the most striking and at the same time most promising features of the religious situation today is the new interest in prayer, the strenuous endeavor to understand it, the search for fresh methods whereby it may be made more efficacious in the life of the individual and of the group.

Some of the causes of this rebirth of prayer are fairly obvious. To begin with, there is the new emphasis on the mystical element in religion. Christianity is a many-sided phenomenon, it has created institutions, customs, rites; it implies a definite ethic; and it has for its background a philosophy or general world view. Yet our age has discovered afresh that Christianity cannot be identified with any or all of these. Its unique greatness is seen in this, that it brings the

soul face to face with ultimate reality, lifting it out of space and time and glorifying it with the vision of the Eternal. Hence, the psychologist is right when he says that *prayer is religion.* The demand of thoughtful and serious minds is not for a new code of ethics, which at best can only say: "You ought, therefore you can," but for religion in a new and entrancing light, as in essence the revelation of the Infinite working in and through the soul, Whose presence and reality man mystically discerns, and from Whom he derives his light, his purity, and his strength. Samuel Taylor Coleridge has fathomed the human craving:

> *"A sense o'er all my soul impressed*
> *That I am weak yet not unblessed,*
> *Since in me, round me, everywhere,*
> *Eternal strength and wisdom are."*

On the intellectual side, we have the rise of the new psychology which seeks to understand prayer as a psychical process. Science is doing a great and useful work in showing how the subconscious life enters into the prayer-experience, and how prayers spring out of deep inner necessities of nature. We

now know that man is so constituted that be his formal beliefs what they may, there are situations in which he is compelled to pray. We know also that efficacious prayer depends on the presence of certain mental states. Without "recollection," the withdrawal of a man into his own soul, without concentration on a high and holy purpose, without surrender of the will, prayer is valueless because a mere playing with words.

Lastly, we are becoming familiar with the empirical effects of prayer in connection with the various "spiritual healing" movements so characteristic of our time. The materialistic tradition which for the past half century has governed the science of medicine to the rigorous exclusion of any moral or spiritual instrumentality in the cure of disease, has at last been challenged. Under the influence of prayer and faith it is now certain that various disorders, incapable of cure by the usual remedies, have been mitigated or wholly overcome. Of course, it is easy to dismiss these instances of spiritual cure as the fruits of "suggestion" or "self-suggestion." But apart from the fact that we do not know the full implications of these terms, we

would, on this hypothesis, have the curious paradox that prayer is explicable only by a theory, which, when believed, would cause men to cease praying. It may be taken as one of the most certain conclusions of research into the nature of religion that all types of prayer, from the charm formulas of European peasants, or the magical working of the Buddhist prayer-mill, to the high experiences of a St. Paul or a St. Teresa, there is always a reference to a Being or beings other than the person who prays.

It is a singular fact that the difficulties and problems which sorely try the faith of one generation hardly exist for the men of the subsequent age. The change is not effected by the discovery of direct and satisfying solutions; it is rather that the problems are now viewed in the light of a wider and more satisfying outlook. With the rise of science in the nineteenth century, men felt as they had not felt before, the difficulty of supposing that prayer had any place in a universe governed by invariable law. Nature was conceived as a vast mechanism controlled entirely from within, in which every event is the result of innumerable antecedent events, in which,

therefore, spontaneity, human or divine, becomes an irrelevance. The religious teachers of the Victorian age, who had accepted the conclusion of science, surrendered at the same time the whole realm of nature to the world of rigid, inviolable law, while reserving the inner world of thought and emotion as the sphere in which God and the soul might meet in real fellowship.

"The two very men," says Dr. W. Herrmann, "who have shown the richest pictures of the Christian life in their sermons, Schleiermacher and F. W. Robertson [and we may add Martineau], have never been able to overcome the thought that the subjection to law of all things that are real to the senses and the inner endlessness that the smallest event has, owing to its dependence on all other events, render it impossible that the progress of the world should be changed, because man will not submit to the fate that has been woven out of the conditions of the present state of the world. In the sermons of these great men we find some of the deepest words ever spoken on the subject of prayer. But that which they have to say about the efficacy of prayer shows how hard

it has become for faith to maintain itself untroubled in the spiritual situation developed by the rise of science." [1]

We now know that science has failed to sound the universe. All the fundamental assumptions of nineteenth century physics are called in question. All dualisms and assumed finalities have been abolished. There is room for the operation of mysterious forces hitherto ignored by "orthodox" science. The end of all prayer is to draw near to God, to find in Him our life and our strength. This is real prayer as distinguished from counterfeits, which are simply tense and burning desires of an earthly order. Now in this real prayer there is a power which can shape the future of man and of the world. In answer to such prayer, energies are renewed and we cease to be weak, dependent victims of this or that external force; inhibitions are swept away and powers of personality are enhanced. We can thus see to some extent how, through prayer, external and objective effects are produced. For the ascent of the mind to God does not exhaust itself in subjective states. The mind

[1] Art. *Gebet* in Herzog's Encyc. (Ed. 1899).

that is at peace with itself, the will that is made strong to suffer and to do, the heart that is sustained by hope and inspiration—these are not dead, mechanical things; they are living forces which ever tend to actualize themselves in a world without. They call into being a new series of events and circumstances which otherwise would not have been. Prayer is thus the creator of great practical enterprises, of causes and movements, that may affect powerfully the destinies of individuals and of nations. Can anyone doubt, for example, that the prayer of a Shaftesbury or a Gladstone set in motion and filled with victorious energy influences that made for the social and spiritual enfranchisement of millions?

Prayer in its highest form implies a certain attitude on the part of the praying soul towards all other souls, and this attitude tends to express itself in outer social and political forms. The God to whom we pray is no respecter of persons. "He maketh His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sendeth rain on the just and the unjust." This universalism of Divine Love which has regard to each individual in accordance with his

needs and capacities is itself an integral element in the perfection of the Deity. Hence so far as I approximate to the Divine ideal, I, in praying to God, shall view my fellows as He views them, shall ask for each what I ask for myself, power to realize his best self in all directions—to do the will of the common Father. But prayer of this order implies ideals that are essentially democratic in character. For I cannot sincerely pray for my brother man in these terms and at the same time refuse him any social or political or religious right; nor can I decline to do all that in me lies to create an environment favorable to the development of all his capacities and aptitudes. Prayer from this point of view may be described as a school of discipline in the virtues that ought to characterize a democratic society.[2]

But it is the purely spiritual effects of prayer that men will always prize most, for it is the soul and the soul's welfare that are of permanent value while all else is transitory. Here is the argument against which no *a priori,* no scientific or philosophical dogma

[2] This paragraph is quoted from my essay in "The Power of Prayer," p. 67 (The Macmillan Company).

can avail anything. Today we are all pragmatists; we verify our doctrines and beliefs by practical tests. Within the sphere of science pragmatism has no place: but in the moral and spiritual world we feel instinctively that it stands for a great truth. We make the great assumption that ultimately the good and true will be found to be one. Now when the pragmatic test is applied to prayer, we know the answer that is given. It is because of the practical benefits of prayer in the ethical and social spheres that men of the most diverse schools of thought, psychologists, moralists, humanists, join in inviting us to practise this high exercise. A well-known American man of science holds that even those who are unable to rise to the heights of the thought that God is personal, but must conceive of Him as an impersonal energy permeating and upholding the universe are yet bound to pray, else something of the greatest value will pass out of their lives. "All serious men," he says, "whatever their intellectual training, must pray, not perhaps for material help, nor in expectation that the laws of the universe shall be changed at their request, not even primarily for strength to

live rightly and justly, but as the supreme effort of the human soul to know God."

What is, however, specially worth noting is that, by all who take an idealistic view of the world, prayer in some sense is now regarded as indispensable to the integrity and development of the spiritual life. This is still further confirmed by the tendency of certain groups which, unable to accept prayer as it is traditionally understood, substitute for it meditation or acts of self-dedication.

When we turn to organized Christianity, we find that on its side many of the objections to prayer which thoughtful men could not but feel, have been removed. Prayer has been undergoing a process of spiritualization. We no longer regard God, who is the true End of all things, as a means to an end, an instrument for the accomplishment of some earthly wish. Nor do we believe that sincere and reverent prayer will work for a violation of the regularities of the physical universe; for these regulations are themselves the revelation of the divine will.

Prayer is not the moving of God's will by ours, but the bringing of our soul into such a relation to God's that the good which

He stands ready to give may find a channel through which it may pour itself into the soul. The man who truly prays does not desire to use God, but he does desire that God should use him.

The truth is, that whether prayer is efficacious or not, whether it touches any Reality beyond itself or not, there are situations, poignant and heart-searching, in which we *must* pray; and it is in such situations that prayer, as a genuine, vital experience, visits the lives of men. It varies as men vary. There are, however, great typical moments in the history of the soul where its function and meaning may be studied. Take for example the tragic experience of bereavement. One dearer to us than life passes into the great darkness and we find ourselves plunged into intolerable agony. The soul is as a blinded creature beating its wings against the iron bars of fate. It grapples for a while with this hostile power that has invaded its peace, and it wastes its energies in vain yearnings for the grace of a day that is dead; or, perhaps in sullen defiance it proclaims the order of the world unjust and irrational and to be submitted to in contemptuous silence.

But no reconciliation can be achieved along either of these paths. Over the soul comes at times the awful sense of the irrevocable and irremediable. "Death is terrible for it is the end"—these words sound like a knell announcing a final doom and the soul stares into a black pit of despair. It is then that a cry is wrung from the sufferer, a cry for help, for light, for some justification of the tragedy. This cry marks the beginning of the upward movement of the soul, for now the sufferer glimpses the possibility that his sorrow is part of the order of human life, and seeks to find a method or a means by which he can acquiesce in this dark and dreadful thing without sacrificing his spiritual integrity. Prayer is here the power that heals or sets up a healing process.

Or take the moral upheaval which comes through the experiences of guilt, or, as the older divines named it, "the conviction of sin." The commonplace routine of life may be broken at any moment by some word, or deed, or experience, perhaps the wounding of the affections, the awakening of conscience to the horror of some self-indulgence, the memory of a long-forgotten ethical appeal,

the apparent working of Divine judgment in national or international calamities—such are some of the incitements that may awaken the wrong-doer to a sense of the evil he has done. And as the awakened conscience is focussed on this or that sinful act or habit, the light that reveals the dark spot makes manifest also that the man is entangled in a network of inter-related tendencies, from which, try as he may, he cannot escape.

Victor Hugo, in his *Les Misérables,* makes Jean Valjean undergo such a profound disturbance in his inner life. He had robbed the good bishop, whose forgiveness, however, had powerfully affected him, breaking through the hard crust of hatred wherewith the actions of man had encased his soul for years. The force of habit, the brutal instinct resisted with one last effort and the ex-convict committed one last crime. Then there flashed on him the vision of his life and it appeared to him terrible. "He saw his soul and it appeared to him frightful." Something gave way within him. He wept he knew not how long. A passerby, however, in the early morning, saw him kneeling on the pavement on front of the bishop's house in the attitude

of prayer. It was the hour of his redemption. The pessimistic conclusion of a great mid-Victorian critic of religion was that "nothing is gained by disregarding the fact that there is no remedy for a bad heart." The remark is profoundly true if the only resources at our disposal for the regeneration of man are those of science and philosophy. But not the preacher only, the student of human nature, a Meredith or a Stevenson or a Wells knows that, as the last-named writer has said: "Prayer is a power. Here God indeed can work miracles. A man with the light of God in his heart can defeat vicious habits, rise again combative and undaunted after a hundred falls, escape from the grip of lusts, and revenges, make head against despair, thrust back the very onset of madness." Amid the sombre and depressing thoughts which modern theories of heredity and circumstance provoke, is there not in this fact, abundantly and brilliantly verified by a myriad testimonies, a spiritual message of boundless hope and comfort to our age? The negative attitude of those who have never sincerely experienced in this region may be set aside as unworthy of atten-

tion, whereas on the other hand, it is the positive assertions of those who know by observation and experience whereof they affirm, that demand explanation at our hands. Surely in this as in other realms the expert has a right to be heard.

Or take the consciousness of unrest, indecision, doubt, and fear of life, so characteristic of youth, with resultant unhappiness and impracticality. Faith and doubt as to any real meaning in existence struggle for the mastery. For a time the subject of this miserable conflict tries to absorb himself in work, deliberately sets aside the spiritual problem as insoluble and cultivates a kind of superficial cynicism, content to live on the lower level of materialistic satisfaction. But no permanent rest can here be found. He is haunted with a divine discontent; he is vaguely conscious of an ideal Presence that cannot be escaped. This inner division becomes in time intolerable. Then the man turns to prayer and gradually the spiritual disorder gives place to clearness and insight, the meaning of life unfolds itself, and experiences that affect the whole after history of the individual fill the inner world with

light and peace. Must we not say that in prayer the soul comes into vital contact with ultimate Reality and shares in the blessedness and creative strength of that Reality?

If prayer is a natural, spontaneous instinct of the soul, it is also, as Luther said, an art. Just as there are born painters, musicians, poets, so there are born pray-ers. It is, therefore, not to be wondered at that many pray with the feeling that their prayers bring little or no help and, indeed, are hardly worthwhile. Their praying, like their religion, is a matter of tradition, with which they have never yet come personally to terms. And yet it may be doubted whether there are any who have received even an elementary religious training and yet cannot look back at this or that moment in the past when they really prayed. Who of us has not recalled, with wistful yearning, rare moments when under the pressure of some intolerable burden—some grief, perhaps, that threatened to wreck our life,—we wrestled with God in agony and would not let Him go until He blessed us; and now in duller and colder times we feel that if only we could regain the raptures of those great moments all would be well

with us and prayer no longer a painful effort, but the very life of the soul. And yet on deeper reflection we realize that not catastrophe and upheaval of the inner world, but normal and steady growth, is the law of spiritual development, and the very difficulties which meet us when we pray are themselves a challenge to our souls, and form, it may be, a needed discipline without which prayer could not have its perfect work.

To begin with the difficulty involved in the very act of praying: one feels instinctively that there is a right and a wrong way, and that on our choice depends the success or failure of the effort. Here, as in every other exercise of our minds, we are subject to the psychological law of attention. We must attend to the matter in hand and refrain from attending to things that have no connection with our present interest. In the words of Christ, the great Master of the art of prayer, "When thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut the door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly." [3] Here the law of attention is

[3] Matthew vi, 6.

formulated in terms at once simple and graphic. We are to shut the doors of the soul, and thus keep out the multitudinous impressions which tend to overwhelm and distract the mind. We must get alone with ourselves, with the interests about which we would pray, and with the God to whom we would pray; but how difficult this is only he can tell who has tried to do it. For a minute or two, perhaps, we succeed in thinking about the subject-matter of our prayer; then our minds fly off at a tangent, a thousand alien thoughts attract us, and we end by mechanically saying a prayer, which is a very different thing from praying. Perhaps in despair we gradually give up the habit as beyond us. What, then, is the remedy, if remedy there be? I answer,—just as lack of will power is cured by willing, or poverty of thought by thinking, so the power of attention is won by attending. The truth is that behind the lack of attention there lurks often a deeper fault—lack of interest. We are not sufficiently interested in the affairs of the inner world, in our spiritual development, in our relation to God, and in our moral destiny. Were we overpoweringly interested in these

things, prayer would become a natural, spontaneous outflow of the mind. In approaching, then, the act of prayer, we would do well, by quiet self-reflection, by brooding over the thought of Psalmist or prophet or teacher, to win a living conviction of the reality and paramount importance of the things of the soul. Once this conviction has been wrought in us, it will be harder for us not to pray than to pray; and as for the mental or moral effort involved in concentration of the mind on spiritual things, this becomes easier by repetition, like any other habit, and, like any other habit, it is achieved, as a rule, gradually and after many a fall. For if prayer in essence be the voluntary turning of the soul to God, it needs no long or elaborate use of words. It may be, as the hymn says, only "the burden of a sigh, the falling of a tear." We can begin to acquire the art of prayer by learning, as it were, its alphabet. Scattered throughout the pages of the Bible and the great classics of Christian devotion will be found many a brief but pregnant phrase or sentence on which our spirits can wing their way to the heart of the Father in heaven.

"Create in me a clean heart, O God;
And renew a right spirit within me."

"Search me, O God, and know my heart;
Try me and know my thoughts;
And see if there be any wicked way in me,
And lead me in the way everlasting."

"O God, be merciful to me, a sinner."

"Lord, I believe; help Thou mine unbelief."

"Father, I have sinned against heaven and before Thee
And am no more worthy to be called Thy son."

"O send out Thy light and Thy truth
That they may lead me."

These brief sentences are typical of many at our disposal. Beginning with such as these, we can gradually extend the scope of our prayer until the habit becomes as essential to our spiritual life as food and exercise are to the life of the body.

So far I have spoken of prayer as an act of normal and self-possessed persons; but the question is often asked, "Are the methods of prayer suitable for the well, equally suit-

able for the sick?" Take the case of a man suffering from the miseries of neurasthenia or psychasthenia; how can he pray, seeing that the very faculties involved in the act of praying are profoundly disturbed, and the effort of mental concentration is an impossible task? In such cases, where the central citadel of personality is invaded, it is obvious that a different method of prayer may be pursued. Constantly do I hear people, suffering from one or another of the numerous nervous maladies of our time, complain that they cannot pray, and that their imperfect attempts have brought no spiritual comfort. The reason is that, in trying to pray as they were accustomed to do in the days when they enjoyed good health, they put an insupportable strain upon their psychic energies, with consequent increased disturbance and mental turmoil. Relaxation—not Concentration—should be the motto of the nervously afflicted. The body should be put in the most restful and relaxed attitude; the mind should not be intensely concerned with any definite or concrete desire, but should be filled with a sense of the Divine Presence, with a feeling of perfect resignation to the Divine will. In

other words, the form of prayer which is to be commended to the suffering is what has been long known in the Church as "Practice of the Presence of God." In the quietude of mind and calm of bodily feelings, which are possible in a state of relaxation, the soul is opened to revelations, sometimes richer and more significant than any vouchsafed in times of perfect health. It is told of that saintly woman of the fourteenth century, Julian of Norwich, that in a time of severe sickness she received a revelation in the strength of which she was able to live for many years afterwards, though the revelation itself was not fully made clear till a much later time. The explanation she gives in the language of the mystics: "'Wouldst thou learn thy Lord's meaning in this thing? Learn it well: Love was His meaning. Who showed it thee? Love. What showed He thee? Love. Wherefore showed it He? For Love. Hold thee therein and thou shalt learn and know more in the same. But thou shalt never know nor learn therein other things without end.' Thus was I learned that Love was our Lord's meaning."[4] This story is

[4] Inge: Studies of English Mystics, p. 77.

not without parallel in our own time. Cases have come to my knowledge of persons who have experienced in this form of prayer a sense of spiritual exaltation, a feeling of inward rest and satisfaction which played no small part in their eventual restoration to normal self-control. Of course, these experiences will be explained away by those who do not believe in the reality of a spiritual world, as self-created delusions. But a delusion does not create a high type of spiritual character, does not lead to profound views of God and of human life. We must believe that these things are the product of contact with the Spirit of truth and goodness. The whole question of prayer, in essence, resolves itself to this: Is there a God able to speak to the creatures He has made? If there is, but if He is unwilling so to speak, He can be no God worthy of reverence or even of a moment's thought. If, however, He is both able and willing to speak, we ought surely to believe the men and women who say they have heard His voice. However great the difficulties which logic and common sense create, life itself will teach us that as the years pass and the shadows of dissolution,

sorrow, and death gather around us, hard as it may be to pray, it will be still harder not to pray.

In the light of what has been said, it would seem as though prayer were only a sign of human weakness, a confession of man's impotence as he faces the harsh necessities of experience. Now it is true that prayer is the expression of the soul's dependence, but it is also the proof and test of man's greatness. "The act of praying," says Coleridge, "that is, praying with a total concentration of the faculties, is the very highest energy of which the human heart is capable." And William James points out that our lives would be fresher and abler if only we would disregard the critical atmosphere in which we have been reared and let ourselves go in prayer. Not only so, but through prayer we gain the consciousness of reserve power, of an enlarged personality. We realize that our being is undergirded by a strength to which we can make appeal when fresh tasks challenge the will. He who has this consciousness fears no task, shrinks from no burden, despairs of no problem, and by the contagion of his strength nerves other souls

to achievements that seem impossible. In prayer it comes to pass that the paradox of St. Augustine is solved: "When my weakness comes from God, it becomes strength."

There are many who have abandoned the habit of prayer for this or that reason; the theology of earlier days is no longer acceptable, or the pressure of life's enslaving routine has crushed out the desire or, it may be, the soul has surrendered to the lure of a materialistic philosophy of life. Yet these persons feel the poverty of their inner world and are depressed with a profound dissatisfaction. They need to pray and yet they cannot. I would suggest that such persons would do well not to attempt to express their desires in words at the present stage of their experience, but to devote a few minutes daily to the exercise of calling their souls to silence and stillness in the presence of the infinite Mystery of the universe. We may interpret this Mystery in manifold ways, but the conscious realization that we belong to It, and are bound up with It, will exercise a steadying, enlarging, and ennobling effect upon mind and heart. Account for it as we may, this is an indisputable psychological fact, as

all who have made the experiment unite in affirming.

Today men are seeking a genuinely spiritual basis for civilization. There is much to encourage them in the search. Recent philosophy is at one with the teaching of religion in affirming the existence and nearness of a world greater than that which meets the outer senses. We poor mortals in the process of evolution, stumbling, falling, guessing, now visited by gleams of a sudden intuition, now plunged in darkness, ignorant of our powers, slowly discovering them, exploring, watching, listening, we are not alone in our earthly wanderings, we are already, though we may not be always conscious of the fact, citizens of a higher world. From that higher world, as a St. Paul, a Pascal, a Swedenborg have believed, there flash at rare moments messages, hints, fragmentary revealings of a reservoir of life and light and love. This spiritual world is not closed to us. In the silence we can hear the divine Voice and distinguish it from the voices of our weaker self and of the world without. Hence prayer is a school of spiritual education in which he who prays advances from day to day in the

knowledge of the best things of life. Inherited prejudices die out, new and large aims are revealed; a sense of brotherhood is born, larger ideals for self and for the world are gradually formed, and the forces making for a new and better social order are generated. "Prayer reminds us," says Amiel, "of pardon and duty. It says to us: 'Thou art loved—love: thou hast received—give; thou must die—labor while thou canst; overcome anger by kindness, and overcome evil with good.' "

I

For Various Gifts and Graces

FOR VARIOUS GIFTS AND GRACES

I

Prayer: For Grace to Pray Aright

ETERNAL God, who art the Beginning and the End of all, who abidest forever and in whom we abide; grant that our prayer to Thee may not be from dull use and wont but because it is our part to confess all that lies heavy upon our souls, because we hunger and thirst for the things which are above. Help us so to ask that we receive that which we have not. Help us to take freely of Thy gifts that we may nourish the seeds in us of faith and beauty. Cleanse our vision that we may see Thine ever-open door, and the riches of a more abundant life, freely given us of Thee. Kindle in us the desire to live in harmony with our prayers, in equal reverence for ourselves and others, in a spirit of sacrifice ever ready to spend and be spent, if only we may serve the humblest of Thy children. *Amen.*

Reading: Conduct Reacts upon Character

WE become what we habitually do. Our conduct registers itself in the bent of our char-

acter and the quality of our spiritual fibre; and there it is forever judged and forever rewarded or punished, as the case may be, by a tribunal whose judgments are all unerringly just. If we do wrong we weaken our will, we deaden our moral sense, we cloud our spiritual vision. That is our punishment. If we do right we strengthen our will, we quicken our moral sense, we clarify our spiritual vision. That is our reward. Nor need we go far to find opportunities for self-discipline which leads to self-transcendence.

The trivial round, the common task,
Will furnish all we need to ask,
Room to deny ourselves, a road
To bring us daily nearer God.

Room to *outgrow* ourselves let us rather say. The word deny is too purely negative. We say *No* to the soul only that it may learn to say *Yes* to a high appeal. From the point of view of spiritual evolution the importance of the homely, humdrum necessity of everyday life cannot be overestimated. It is scarcely an exaggeration to say all moral evil is resolvable in the last resort into selfishness, and all moral goodness into unselfishness. . . . In the trivial round and the common task these combatants find a battlefield which clears itself anew from day to day.

II

Prayer: For the Knowledge of God's Will

O GOD, by whom the meek are guided in judgment and light riseth up from darkness for the godly; Grant us in our doubts and uncertainties the grace to ask what Thou wouldest have us to do; that the spirit of wisdom may save us from false choices, and that in Thy light we may see light, and in Thy straight path may not stumble; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

Reading: The Christian Ideal Is a Power as Well as a Law

ONLY those who seek to direct their lives according to the Christian law can gain a firm grasp of Christian truth. Only those who strive to live in the Spiritual Order and to make its precepts real in their practical activities, can gain an abiding certainty or a true understanding of it. It cannot be known from without by inquiry, but only from within by practice. But not less important is the converse truth that such practice is only possible in the full degree by those who have learned to rest in the inner memory and peace of the Spiritual Order. If there is essential truth in the thought

of a "Will to Believe," not less is there in that of a "Faith to Will." The highest energy is the privilege of those who themselves "have entered into the beginning of peace." . . . It is he who from a higher sphere draws energy and inspiration for the tasks that meet him in the astral world, and who is able to bring something of the calm of the Spiritual Order into the confusion of the natural, who shows the truest mastery over the world. Because his deeper life and citizenship is elsewhere, he is not less but more effective as a citizen of the visible polity to which he belongs.

III

Prayer: For Grace to Bear and Forbear

OUR Father: Purge out of every heart the lurking grudge. Give us grace and strength to forbear and to persevere. Give us grace to accept and to forgive offences. Forgetful ourselves, help us to bear cheerfully the forgetfulness of others. Give us courage, gaiety and the quiet mind. Spare to us our friends, soften to us our enemies. Bless us, if it may be, in all our innocent endeavors. Give us the strength to encounter that which is to come, that we be brave in peril, constant in tribulation, temperate in wrath, and in all changes of fortune,

and down to the gates of death, loyal and loving one to another. For Christ's sake. *Amen.*

Reading: Those Who Commit Themselves to God Have Nothing to Fear

NO one gets true peace, or has really got to the true foundation of things until, as far as his own dignity is concerned, he is in a position to say, you can wrong God and you can wrong Society; and it may be my duty to stand up for God and for Society; but me, as far as I am concerned, you cannot provoke. That is the ideal to which we have to attain. That is the meekness which is appropriate to sinners like ourselves who know what we deserve, who *in a general review of life,* can seldom feel that we are suffering unmerited wrong; but it is the meekness also of the sinless and righteous one. . . . The meek who ever committed themselves to Him who judgest righteously, have nothing to fear. "Friend, come up higher" is all that is before them. They will simply, in steady and royal advance, enter into the full heritage of that which men keep back from them, but God has in store for them. . . . The world says: "Stand up for your rights; make the most of yourself; don't let any man put upon you." And so we are always standing on our dignity, always thinking ourselves in-

sulted, imposed upon. "Blessed are the meek," says our Lord, "for they shall inherit the earth."

IV

Prayer: For Joy

ALMIGHTY God, grant that I may awake to the joy of this day, finding gladness in all its toil and difficulty and in its pleasure and success, in all its failures and sorrow; teach me to throw open the windows of my life, that I may look always away from myself, and behold the need of the world: give me the will and strength to bring the gift of Thy gladness to others of Thy children, that with them I may stand to bear the burden and heat of the day and offer Thee the praise of work well done: through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

Reading: No Man Can Take from You Your Joy in God

CAN a man have such joy in his character, in being the thing he is, that no other man can take his joy from him? Just as soon as we ask ourselves that question, how our imperfections and

sins start up before us! . . . What idlest chatterer cannot pluck away our self-satisfaction, and steal the last trace of joy in our characters. And yet with all this true, it is not all the truth. A block of marble or wood laying alone upon the hill-top may be ugly and uninteresting. The same block of wood or marble brought into a sculptor's workshop, though his hands may not have touched it yet, or may have only rudely blocked out his design, may be a thing to reverence, may stir our imagination and our love. I am a poor, weak, wicked man. Any small joy in myself which I have been able to conceive, your well-deserved scorn can steal from me in an instant. But now suppose that Christ takes me into His hands. I am a poor dull block still, but I am His. Is not the whole thing changed? Now there is a joy in character which is not present consciousness but certain prophecy, which is not self-conceit but trust in the Creator's hands whose power I feel upon me. Now let the shrewd critic come and find his fault with me; now let him point out all the stains and flaws which his keen eye can see. I am not scornful of his criticism. I welcome it for it will help me. But it no longer makes me wretched. I am in Christ. In hope of what he shall make of me, is making of me, my joy abides.

V

Prayer: For Spiritual Reality

MY Father and my God, lead me and guide me on the dim and perilous path of life. Too long have I directed my own steps, too long have I lived without Thy wisdom stumbling in the darkness because I did not love Thy light. But now I desire nothing, I need nothing but to know that Thou art in me and I am in Thee. Let the fire of Thy love consume the false shows wherewith my weaker self has deceived me. Make me real as thou art real. Inspire me with a passion for righteousness and likeness to the Man of Nazareth that I may love as He loved, and find my joy as He found His joy in being and doing good. Only when, like Him, I am perfectly united to Thee, shall my life be truly alive.

Dwell Thou within me to give me His courage, His tenderness, His simplicity, to transform my own poor shadow-self into the likeness of His truth and strength. *Amen.*

Reading: The Great Experiences in Life are Those which God Works in Us

THE great things God does for us are not the things which He does outside of us—His

providential guidance, deliverance from danger and the like, the gifts that life is always bringing to us so wonderfully. The great things God does for us are done within us, in the effects of those experiences upon our natures. Do our experiences pass within to do the work which God's Spirit can enable them to do, leaving us when they have gone with some new grace of courage, some larger vision of God, some deeper sympathy with man, some surer mastery of life? Or do they only pass us by, recording in our memories the fact that they have come to us, just as a passing trifler would scrawl his name upon a wayside rock? The test of what we are getting out of life is its reactions on our souls. An old man once said to a youth setting out upon the road —"Remember life will either soften your heart, or it will harden it, or else it will break it." There is much truth in his discernment; and every kind of experience has this varied power. The question of life's success is not what we have made of it, but what it has made of us! What kind of men and women have we become in the contact with life? What kind of souls have we developed through the stress and strain? Are our natures being developed, our hearts being softened, our minds growing clearer about the great things, our spirits entering more deeply into the living peace of Christ? Is the vision of Christ growing finer and more radiant year by year, as the face of Beatrice became to Dante, the

higher he ascended toward Paradise? . . . These are two great experiences, the enduring experiences, beside which the things which merely touch our outward life are but débris, of no more real or lasting value than the trifles we bring back from a foreign tour to keep in our cupboards for mementoes of the past. The great things of life are the abiding influences wrought into our natures by the gracious discipline of God.

VI

Prayer: For the Doing of God's Will

ALMIGHTY God, our Heavenly Father, in whom we live and move and have our being, who hast created us for Thyself so that we can find rest only in Thee; Grant unto us purity of heart and strength of purpose, so that no selfish passion may hinder us from knowing Thy will and no weakness from doing it, that in Thy light we may see light clearly and in Thy service find perfect freedom through the Spirit of Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

Reading: Discipline is a Necessity

OUR social Gospel is incomplete. It does not embrace the full Christian doctrines of the

body. That men cannot rise to their full spiritual destiny while living under degrading physical conditions is only one-half of the truth about the body, and—with all due respect to social workers—not the most important half. The other half of the truth is that no man who neglects bodily discipline —whether he be a well-paid artisan, gorging himself with coarse food, or an aristocrat of culture choosing his refined physical pleasures with artistic restraint—can enter the kingdom which God has prepared for him. Discipline is not merely a matter of refraining from excess. As in the things of the spirit, so in the things of the body, Christian discipline means the uprooting of self-gratification and self-will. The refined man who elects to have simple meals and simple clothing and who chooses each course and each garment with no other thought than his own health, taste and predilictions, is as undisciplined and as really given over to the flesh, as the gourmand and the ludicrously arrayed. . . .

Today, when the ordeal of war has proved so much of our gold to be dross, not a few of those who were insistent that a comfortable income and luxurious surroundings were essential to the production of good work, are realizing that what they thought the hall-mark of high culture was in reality the evidence of a vulgarized taste. Once more men are casting behind them what seemed to them to make life fine and free and in doing so, discover

that they are merely discarding a hampering load of rubbish. Renunciation instead of being decried as a part of a subterranean conspiracy against life, is coming to be recognized as the key to man's true kingdom, the gate into life's treasure-house.

VII

Prayer: For Power to Serve Humanity

O LOVE that passeth knowledge, come into my heart with all Thy fulness, that my heart may be made gentle with Thy gentleness. Grant me to bear others' burdens that I may cease to live for myself. Come Thou in that I may cease to be my own. Let me share with Thee in the bearing of the sin and sorrow of the vast world, let me take up the crosses of the laboring and the heavy-laden. Fill me with Thyself that I may be emptied of all pride. Fill me with Thyself that I may become the servant of humanity. *Amen.*

Reading: F. W. Robertson Has Put on Record Ten Good Resolutions

TO try to be thoroughly poor in spirit, meek, and to be ever ready to be silent when others speak.

To learn from everyone.

To try to feel my own insignificance.

To believe in myself and the powers with which I am entrusted.

To try to make conversation more useful.

To try to despise the principle of the day,—"every man his own trumpeter."

To speak less of self and to think less.

To contend one by one against evil thoughts.

To try to fix my thoughts in prayer without distraction.

To watch over a growing habit of uncharitable judgment.

VIII

Prayer: For the Sympathy of Christ

LORD, help me to show towards my fellow-men that kindness which I have so often craved from them. May I think of my neighbor not as

my rival who would undo me, but as my brother who needs me. Give me the compassion of Jesus that I may never be able to turn coldly from any man who needs me. Make me quick to hear the cry of suffering. Turn my feet toward the house of sorrow. Grant me to know the joy of carrying hope to hearts that have been long strangers to hope. I remember how lonely I have been in sickness; help me to relieve the loneliness of the sick. I remember how often I have longed for the touch of a friendly hand: help me to relieve the heart-hunger of the neglected. *Amen.*

Reading: We Ought to Search for Good Never for Evil in Men

WE ourselves, being ennobled, see noble things, and loving, find out love. Little touches of goodness, love and courage in men, which, formerly looking for perfection, we passed over, now attract us like flowers on a dusty highway. We take them as keys to the character and door after door flies open to us. The man reveals the treasures of his heart. We find aspiration, penitence, tenderness, in those we thought grovelling, hard and selfish. We trust men, we throw ourselves upon the good in them, and they become better, now that they are not suspected of being evil. Driven by our new

principle to seek for good and not for evil, and to find it in all, we take notice of ordinary men whom we have passed over, and it is with an exquisite surprise that we become conscious of the vast amount of daily sacrifice done by common men and women, by those whom we call "dull," by those who have to fight a hard battle for the poor. . . . Let the Lamp of Love shine with tender brightness on your home, on your friends, on your society, on the comfortable and the poor, on ignorant and wise, and on your enemies. Let its light be like the sunshine of God which falls on the good and on the evil.

IX

Prayer: For Stillness

ETERNAL Father, in whom is no variableness neither shadow of turning, whose stillness is around within us, to repose in whose presence is sweetest joy and refreshment; Enfold us in this ineffable peace which is Thine own unchanging will. Still our disquietude, soothe our restlessness, say to our hearts "Peace, be still." Brood over us, within us, Spirit of Perfect Peace, so that outwardly we may reflect the inner stillness of our souls, and that we may bear change, distraction, sudden assaults of temptation and disappointment, and still be found

close to Thee enfolded in Thy loving care. Let us be undisturbed and in true quietness fulfil the calling wherewith Thou hast called us. *Amen.*

Reading: True Silence Is the Gift of God

TRUE silence is not the work of men. We do not make it. It is God's gift; it is the atmosphere of His presence enfolding the souls of those who enter into its mysterious stillness. We may withdraw from the world's jangle and strife and by deliberate act shut out its clamant demands, but we cannot command the silence which is from above. It is ours when God comes forth and rolls away the things of time and sense that we may receive Him and listen to what He has to teach, the truth which is above all speech in its revelation of the wonder of the unseen and the hidden purposes of life.

"We do not know each other yet; we have not yet dared to be silent." That was the cry of one who felt love's unsatisfied knowledge, and recognized that it could never be gained until speech had given place to the truer, deeper revelation of silence. It may be that many devout people have not yet attained the highest knowledge of the God they earnestly, yet ignorantly worship. They are too self-centred, or they think only how by their

cries they may call Him to their aid, when, if they would but quietly wait, they would find Him near already, waiting to manifest Himself. They know nothing of the speech of silence, in its direct disclosure of God, the revelation of Himself and of themselves in the deep quietness of His Presence.

To enter into this silence is no easy task. It requires the whole effort of a man. All his powers of will, thought, and affection must be exercised before he can share it. The mere cessation of work is not enough; restraint of speech does not secure it; only those who resign themselves to the mysteries of the Presence before which we all live, enter into it. They cannot be true initiates until they listen to its strange searching speech, and respond to it in the language of the soul which is beyond the power of words. In the silence we learn the secret of fellowship with God and with those whom we can no longer see.

X

Prayer: For Light and Love and Joy

O HOLY Light of God,
Ever radiant through despair and death,
Ever undimmed and splendid in the darkness,
Shine Thou today in this dark heart of mine.

O holy Love of God,
Dying for our life,
Shining eternally for our perfection,
Work Thou today in this weak heart of mine.

O holy Joy of God,
Sharing the gladness of the least of all Thy creatures,
Taking delight in mortals in all sweet human beauty,
Be jubilant today in this dull heart of mine. *Amen.*

Reading: Sharing the Pains of God, We Also Share His Joy

JUST as when we love some one, there is discovered to us something of the value which this human individual has for God, so in the horror caused by some revelation of evil we enter, temporarily and according to the limit of our small human heart, into the pain of God. . . . Painful tension is the natural result of contact between a Christlike mind and certain things in this world of ours. . . . Just as we believe that the pain of God is only a partial or transitional aspect of Reality, that the whole, of which the pain is a necessary part, is transcendent joy, "the glory of the sum of things," so surely are those who are called to share the pain of God meant to enter into God's triumph. The prayer beginning on the note of dis-

tress may end—sooner or later, if it is the prayer of faith, must end—on the note of confidence and calm. Such, if we may look at all into the mystery of Gethsemane, was the passage of the Divine-Human mind during that momentous hour—at first the agony, and in the end the strong and victorious acceptance, "Thy will be done."

XI

Prayer: For the Indwelling of the Spirit

SPIRIT of purity and grace: how can we thank Thee for the glory of those early visions and for Thy rebukes of our low ambitions? O gird us, we pray Thee, that we may no longer fear that which is difficult nor scorn that which is ordinary. Let our common task glow again with the light of holy purpose, and give us some part in Thy work which forever abides.

Conform our lives with Thine eternal will. Give us grace to cast ease aside and to act in the day of our opportunity. Let no past grandeur chill our ardor and no idle dream of the future arrest us in the duty of today; and if we need the discipline of failures and sorrow, help us to be refined and not consumed by the flame.

We acknowledge every movement of Thy Spirit within us to create and to release our best purposes.

And when we fall from our enthusiasms may we be still with Thee. May we clasp hands with duty as with a dear friend, and so may we have the joy in Jesus in whose name we offer ourselves anew to Thee. *Amen.*

Reading: Shall We Not Call Our Experiences of Adversity Good?

THAT depends on what price we are ready to pay for deeper insight into the meaning of the world, for awakened hearts, for greater consequent ability to serve our comrades, and for unfaltering courage to further meet the demands of life. Some evil, some misfortune is inevitable. Nothing that we can do, can change it or can drive it away. It is, as we say, as inevitable as a chance of Fate, but rather we should say, it is the will of God that we drink the bitter cup to the deep dregs. If we rebel and fight against it (as at first from human nature we can hardly help doing) we miss its blessing; and so it is, if we try to escape from it by flight or yield to it in weakness. Our path in the face of such inevitable ills is a dauntless acquiescence. Who knows, after all, what chains may be breaking which all unconsciously we had forged for ourselves, or how through calamity and acquiescence our souls may be freed to live on those higher spiritual levels

to which we were blind in our unawakened hours of ease? On these levels a light is shining

"A light that never was on sea or land,
The consecration and the poet's dream."

XII

Prayer: For an Untroubled Spirit

O GOD, refresh and gladden my spirit; purify my heart; illumine my power. I lay all my affairs in Thy hands; Thou art my Guide and my Refuge. I will not be sorrowful and grieved any more. I will be a happy, joyful being. I will not be over-anxious any more. I will not let trouble harass me any longer. I will not dwell on the unpleasant things of my life.

O God, Thou art kinder to me than I am to myself. I dedicate myself to Thee, O Lord. *Amen.*

Reading: The Secret of Peace Lies in Putting First Things First

OUR Lord, in his character of spiritual physician, advises men how to defend themselves against the disease of anxiety, from whatever cause arising, and suggests remedies to those who have already

fallen victims to this most insidious and painful complaint. He calls experience to witness that a man's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions, and he argues that for those who believe in a good God it is wholly illogical to regard themselves as drifting among nameless dangers. If we would be at peace, He said, we must not cultivate "a doubtful mind." It is characteristic of our Lord's teaching that He never said one word to discourage the search for truth, nor against the nobler ambitions whose fruition His parables suggest may not be over at death. A desire for benevolent power He seems to have regarded as a desire belonging to the eternal side of man's nature; but for that worldly ambition which He summarized as a perpetual distress of mind consequent upon the consideration of food and clothes, He has nothing but condemnation. Such a state of distress is, He said, altogether unworthy of a religious man. The Gentiles sought after such things—the Romans, that is, whose spirituality was so much less developed than that of the Jews; but whoever would obtain peace should resolutely keep the just proportions of life in mind—should let great considerations have the first, should seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, and regard smaller things as additional, not essential.

XIII

Prayer: For Forgiveness

FATHER, I am not worthy to be called Thy son. I have lived a blind life; ignorant and foolish have been my days. But now Thy Spirit has opened my eyes, and has set in order before me all the sins and shortcomings of the past. Now I see myself, not with the clearness of Thy all-searching vision, but in the dim twilight of my own thought. Forgive all the evil I have done by thought, word and deed. Restore to me a sense of Thy nearness and Thy grace. I ask for no miracle, no violation of Thy holy laws which bind sorrow to sin, penalty to wrong. Only speak the healing and reconciling word, deepen my contrition, fortify my will, touch me with Thy love, and hereafter I will serve Thee with undivided mind, and if it may be, do something for Thy sake that may be pleasing in Thy sight. Cast me not away from Thy service, but be patient with me a little longer. And this I ask in Christ's name. *Amen.*

Reading: Blessed Hope For the Penitent

EVEN omnipotence cannot make what has been not to have been. The guilt, the moral wrongness of sin is likewise unalterable; nothing can

relieve it by a single shade of God's reprobation; whatever enormity belonged to it at the time of its commission cleaves inexorably to it forever.

The self-propagating power of sin never dies save with sin itself. No expiation can affect the corrupting energy of sin; for this is its essential nature, and cannot be severed from it even by the Almighty.

But though the corrupting energy of sin cannot be destroyed so long as sin exists, yet the cause may be destroyed, the sin itself, and herein we have the sole, yet most blessed, hope for the sinful man. The fact that sin has been committed is unalterable; the exact measure of its inherent guilt may never be diminished; but the principle of evil, the sense alike of the evil act, the guilt and the evil energy may itself be destroyed; also instead of love of evil there can be willing devotion to goodness and truth; instead of remoteness from God, there can be richness of life with Him. . . . There is only one way of escaping the doom of the sinful soul. If sin be expelled from the soul, the death which issues solely from it is prevented. This is the only salvation for man,—salvation from sin itself, not from its consequences, either here or hereafter. There are saints that shall enter the kingdom of heaven halt and maimed, thus carrying with them the fruits of their sin unto the presence of the Eternal; and which of us shall not? God's forgiveness does not alter our past, nor save us from the consequences of that

fact, but kills outright within us the evil that is present.

XIV

Prayer: For Refreshment Amid the Trials of Life

GOD of our life, there are days when the burdens we carry chafe our shoulders and weigh us down; when the road seems dreary, the skies grey and threatening; when our lives have no music in them, and our hearts are lonely, and our souls have lost their courage. Flood the path with light, we beseech Thee; turn our eyes to where the skies are full of promise; tune our hearts to brave music; give us the sense of comradeship with heroes and saints of every age; and so quicken our spirits that we may be able to encourage the souls of all who journey with us on the road of life, to Thy honor and glory. *Amen.*

Reading: To Bear the Yoke of Christ is the Secret of Blessedness

HEAR me, my friends: I dare not say I know there is a Father. I dare not even say I think: I can only say with my whole heart I hope

we have a Father in heaven, but Jesus says He knows. Am *I* to say He does not know? Can I, who know so much I would gladly have otherwise in myself, imagine His being less honest than I am? If He tells me, He knows I am dumb and listen. One *I know: there is,* outweighs a whole creation of voices crying each *I know not, therefore, there is not.* What does He mean by *Take my yoke upon you and learn of me?* He means, "Take upon you the yoke I wear; learn to do as I do, who submit everything and refer everything to the will of my Father, yea, have my will only in the carrying out of His: be meek and lowly of heart and ye shall find rest unto your souls." With all the grief of humanity in His heart, in the face of the doubt that awaited Him, He yet says, "For my yoke, the yoke I wear, is easy, the burden I bear is light." What makes that yoke easy—that burden light? That it was the will of the Father.

XV

Prayer: For Sincerity

O GOD of truth, we would be upright in all things; keep us, we entreat Thee, from guile and hypocrisy. Neither in our approach to Thee, nor in our dealings with our fellowmen may there

be any secret impiety or covert unbelief. Make us simple and sincere, lovers of the just balance, fearers of Thy eternal and unswerving law. Amid the compromises of the world, keep us loyal to conscience; among those who follow after success, make us faithful servants of the Cross. Confirm and hearten, we pray Thee, all brave souls who are set in the high places of the field. Grant them to be more than conquerors; and let every humble servant of Thine, in poverty or reproach, find courage and strength in the faith which is itself the victory that overcometh the world. *Amen.*

Reading: We Become Like Those Whom We Habitually Admire

IF events change men, much more persons, no man can meet another on the street without making some mark upon him. We say we exchange words when we meet; what we exchange is souls. And when intercourse is very close and very frequent, so complete is this exchange that recognizable bits of one soul begin to show in the other's nature, and the second is conscious of a similar and growing debt to the first. This mysterious approximation of the souls; who has not witnessed? . . . It is the law of Influence that we become like those whom we habitually admire. Through all the range of

history, of literature and biography this law prevails. Men are all mosaics of other men. There was a savor of David about Jonathan, and a savor of Jonathan about David. Jean Valjean in the masterpiece of Victor Hugo, is Bishop Bienvenu risen from the dead. Metempsychosis is a fact. George Eliot's message to the world was that men and women make men and women. The Family, the cradle of mankind, has no meaning apart from this. Society itself is nothing but a rallying-point for those omnipotent forces to do their work. On the doctrine of Influence, in short, the whole vast pyramid of humanity is built.

XVI

Prayer: For the Bringing in of the Kingdom

FATHER of all men, King of the Kingdom of Heaven, supreme and perfect love, in unison with all my brothers and sisters who in all ages have worshipped Thee and yearned to see Thy sovereignty acknowledged over all the earth, I adore Thee. Cleanse my heart from all selfishness, purify me that I may take my part in bringing Thy kingdom among men; unite us in all love to one another, and in the hatred of all that is evil. By Thy Holy Spirit in us, hasten the day when there shall be

no more sighing, no more tears; take away from us the love of Mammon; help us to sacrifice ourselves for others' good: revive in all disciples of our Master His holy indignation at all injustice and His innocent life in the midst of sin. For His sake. *Amen.*

Reading: The Revelation of God in Christ is the True Ground of Human Brotherhood

WE say that Christianity can bring about a true fraternity among men. But this is an elliptical mode of speech, and may be a misleading one. Christianity, as a mere system of doctrines or practices, will never make men brothers. By Christianity we must understand the reconciliation of mankind to God in Christ; we must understand the power and privilege of saying: "Our Father—Thy will be done on earth as it is in Heaven." No motive or set of motives will bind us together; He binds us who has given His Son for us all, that we might not live forever in separation from Him and from each other. There is another which is, in practice, even more fatal. We are apt to say "these large schemes of the universe, which we hear so much of, are vain; what good can come of them? Let us try to do our duty each in his own sphere." An excellent resolution, but too often adopted only

in spite and therefore leading to no result. We exalt the little for the sake of disparaging the large; presently we grow weary of not doing more; we fly back to great schemes which we have pronounced abortive: yet because we find them so, we do nothing. This prayer meets us at each point and will not allow us to escape by one pretext or another. It does not treat the projects of men for universal societies, unbounded pantisocracies, as too large. It overreaches them all with these words, "as in Heaven." It opens to us the vision of a society in which angels and archangels, and the spirits of the just made perfect, are citizens, and in which we too have an inheritance. It does not look upon any homely individual task of self-sacrifice as insignificant. "So upon earth" meets every such case and reminds us that the lowliest tasks beseem the disciples of Him who "took upon Him the form of a servant and was found in fashion as a man."

XVII

Prayer: For a Spirit of Confidence Amid the Mysteries of the World

LORD of all, who knowest the painful mystery Thou art to us often, who knowest how this world of Thine often staggers and confuses us, and

who hast made it thus; pity our blindness, be patient with our agitation, and comfort us with the comfort of the Spirit which silently witnesseth with our spirit, and strengthen us to labor in the dark by the light of the little lamp that shines until the day star arrives and dawn is in our hearts. Lead us and create in us toward the most choice behavior to which we can attain, fostering in us the heart by which the life is purified; seeking that our work be always true, however humble, and that in us and through us others may find help and no hindrance. Teach us so to mingle with all sorts and conditions of men that the best in them may be made manifest. Strengthen us to be brave and calm and patient in adversity and amid fulness of bread to possess our souls free from selfishness and pride. May we live in Thee who art our wealth and our peace. *Amen.*

Reading: Our Primary Need Is For Light

THE struggle for light, with its wide fellowship and high enthusiasms will displace the struggle for power, with its mean passions, its monstrous illusions and its contemptible ideals. Instead of Education being a department of government, government will be a department of Education. The struggle for power will end, not as some predict,

in universal revolution, which would merely set it going again in another form, but by being submerged, lost sight of, snowed under by the greater interests that centre around the struggle for light. I say these things will happen. But they will not happen unless men are sufficiently resolved that they shall. Already thousands are so resolved. Let us add our resolutions to others, thereby taking the first step towards the recovery of the lost radiance of the Christian religion. For one thing we may be assured. The struggle for light will not stop as a first series of discoveries. It will go on and on, from point to point, from position to position, from insight to insight, until the fruits of the Spirit are possessed, the eternal values revealed, the unsearchable riches laid bare, the many mansions fully opened, and the turmoil of life transfigured and explained in the music and dancing of an immortal world.

XVIII

Prayer: For Spiritual Wisdom

ALMIGHTY God, by Thy Spirit teach me what is wise and what is foolish, what is noble and what is mean, what is eternal and what is passing. And if Thou findest that Thy greatest

things are not my greatest, and that the sweetest things of Thy world are not sweetest to me, have mercy. Make me wise to know what I would soonest part with: whether, if the choice were given me, I would rather part with truth than wealth; whether I desire more the honors of the world than the hidden manna and the name written in the book of life. May I prefer goodness to greatness, pureness to pride, worthiness to wealth, the doing of one good thing to the hearing of many great ones: rather to be of Thy unknown known ones written in Thy book of life than to have my name written in the book of earthly fame. *Amen.*

Reading: Nothing Befalls Us That Is Not in the Nature of Ourselves

THERE comes no adventure but wears to our soul the shape of our everyday thoughts; and deeds of heroism are but offered to those who, for many long years, have been heroes in obscurity and silence. And whether you climb up the mountain or go down the hill to the valley, whether you journey to the end of the world or merely walk round your house, none but yourself shall meet you on the highway of fate. If Judas go forth tonight, it is toward Judas his steps will tend, nor will chance for betrayal be lacking: but let Socrates open his

door, he shall find Socrates asleep on his threshold before him, and there will be occasion for wisdom. Our advantages hover around us like bees round the hive when preparing to swarm. They wait till the mother-idea has come forth from our soul, and no sooner has she appeared than they all come rushing toward her. Be false and falsehoods will hasten to you; love, and adventures will flock to you, throbbing with love. They seem to be all on the watch for the signal we hoist from within, and if the soul grow wiser towards evening, the sorrow will grow wiser too that the soul had fashioned for itself in the morning.

XIX

Prayer: For Reassurance of Faith

WE beseech Thee, O Lord, that the memory of the past may comfort us in all the future when sorrows like storms on the mountains seem likely to sweep us away. May we remember the deliverances of old, and abide in faith. When the flame threatens to consume us may we call to mind the times gone by when Thou didst stand by us in the fire, and protect us. When the fear of death draws near, may we recollect Thy words, that because Thou hast overcome we shall overcome also.

When it seems as though earthly hopes were blasted, may we quit ourselves like men, and stand up in the midst of trial and trouble and bear patiently Thy will and endure to the end. For Thy Name's sake. *Amen.*

Reading: Psychology Cannot Give an Ultimate Explanation of Prayer

GRANTED that suggestion may be the means of developing bodily and mental energy, there is no reason why it should not be the channel by which we receive answers to prayer. If concentration on whatever suggests goodness and power has these beneficial results, there is no reason why the law should not continue to hold good when the goodness and power are conceived of as centred in a living God who is our heavenly Father. We should agree that, let us say, the doctrine of evolution in no way contradicts the belief that God created the world. It only describes the way in which He created it. Nor should we hesitate to thank God for our food because it came through the agency of the farmer and the baker or because the corn out of which it was made grew in accordance with the laws of nature. In the same way, suggestion may be the psychological channel through which many blessings enter into our lives. To assert

this neither proves nor disproves the existence of a God from whom they ultimately came and who created both life and the conditions of life.

XX

Prayer: For Strength and Light

WE have not loved others in all classes of society, as Thou, O Lord, hast loved us. We have not thanked Thee sufficiently for the treasures of knowledge, and for the opportunities of doing good, which Thou hast given us in this latter day.

We have worried ourselves too much about the religious gossip of the age, and have not considered enough the fixed forms of truth. We have been indolent, and have made many excuses for falling short in Thy work. And now, O Lord, in these difficult times, when there is a seeming opposition of knowledge and faith, and an accumulation of facts beyond the power of the human mind to conceive; and good men of all religions, more and more, meet in Thee; and the strife between classes in Society, and between good and evil in our own souls, is not less than of old; and the love of pleasure and the desires of the flesh are always coming in between us and Thee; and we cannot rise above these things to see the light of Heaven, but are

tossed upon a sea of troubles—we pray Thee to be our guide and strength and light, that, looking up to Thee always, we may behold the rock on which we stand, and be confident in the word which Thou hast spoken. *Amen.*

Reading: The True Ideal of Life Makes Man a Fellow-worker With God

THE true ideal of life is essentially fearless, active, aspiring, social, generous. It values all that this life can give, though in varying degrees, but it values the getting of these good gifts more than the gifts themselves. It frankly recognizes that this world is a place in which effort, pain, danger and death must be undergone by everyone in it, but it does not count it a worse world on that account. Its attitude toward it is robust. For instance, it counts not absolute knowledge either of God or of Nature or Man as of the highest value. It asks not to be given knowledge of this kind made up in neat parcels for immediate consumption, it rejoices rather in the privilege of wringing it out of things. It believes that God wills this. It asks not for immunity from danger, pain or death, for it believes that life would lose its educative value if opportunities for courage, self-sacrifice, love and faith were removed from it; that life, moreover,

would lose its hallowing mystery, its solemn impressions, if there were nothing dark and painful and inexplicable in it.

XXI

Prayer: For Moral Courage

LORD and King, we pray Thee this day for courage to face unpopularity for the sake of truth; for courage to declare boldly our convictions, though they make us despised; for courage to break with evil custom and evil opinions, even though for so doing we are shunned and outcast.

Give us strong hearts that will not fear what any man may do unto us, confident in the power of truth to stablish itself by its own inherent force. Give us, O Lord, the spirit of boldness, that we may trample on our fear of our fellows; being strong in Thee and very courageous. *Amen.*

Reading: The Courage We Require Most in Ordinary Life is Moral Courage

THE courage we require most is the courage which fights not against weapons or engines of war, but against the opinions, prejudices, and

meannesses of mankind. It is a courage of which Aristotle had no distinct conception, nor can we define its exact limits. The person who is gifted with it is himself under all circumstances; he is perhaps rather too much given to fighting the hypocrisies and unrealities of the world, yet a few examples may be given to bring this character out in a clearer light. At school or college he will not simply fall into the ways of others, talk as they talk—he will not allow low language to be used, or low principles to be maintained in his presence; neither will he suffer a friend to be traduced or ridiculed without standing up for him. He will have no false shame about himself and his circumstances, knowing that simplicity and truth are always better than pretence or concealment. If he has opinions he is willing to assert them. The breath of opposition does not flutter him nor the loud voice terrify him; he is not dependent on accidents of time or place; he is no regarder of persons, neither will he be much affected by compliments and flattery; on all occasions, wherever we meet him, in business or society, he shows himself to be a man.

Such characters are rarer than formerly, yet the need of them is greater than ever, for the world as it grows wiser seems also to grow weaker. Because life is made so easy to all of us, we must not therefore take it easily or lose ourselves in sentimentalism or the feeble criticism of all things.

XXII

Prayer: For Consecration to the Divine Service

BLESS and accept, dear Master and beloved Inspirer of all goodness, truth and beauty, this offering of our hearts' desires. Meet with us here and as we kneel before Thee, cleanse our souls from all the soiling of the world, open the eyes of our understanding, and lift us up to Thine own land of peace. Tender has been Thy love, O Lord, which has accompanied us thus far; accept Thou our love in return and pardon its defects in will and deed. Unto Thy glory we humbly offer ourselves to be used and fashioned for the larger life of service on this earth and in the great Hereafter where, we believe, fresh revelations of Thy love await our coming. Enter into our inmost souls and leave them not forever. *Amen.*

Reading: Love and Repentance Lead to a New Life

JESUS said, "Think ye I am come to call the Righteous? I came not to call the righteous,

but sinners to repentance." Subtly and marvellously does Goethe depict this in the spiritual development of Margaret in "Faust." We see her rising even through her fall, to moral dignity, and moral greatness. From the weak, inexperienced victim, she becomes the martyr, voluntarily expiating her sin by suffering, then the teacher of sages in Heaven.

If the hard and bitter experiences of life taught us no lessons and gave us no new strength; if the wasted years, so far as our own contentment and happiness are concerned, bore no fruit for the future and the Kingdom of God; if no atonement of penitence, love and service were permitted man for his sins; if there were no God, holding us by the hand, planning for us and watching over us, leading us on; if this life were our only life and there were no eternity in which to profit by what we have learned and suffered here, who could find the courage to continue such a life to the end? But believing as we do, we can endure, we can be patient, we can go on loving and trusting and working. We can pronounce life good. The consolations of the Lord are not small. "Deep is the ploughing of the earthquake. Deep is the ploughing of grief, but oftimes less would not suffice for the agriculture of God. Upon a single night of earthquake He plants a thousand years of pleasant habitation for the children of men." (De Quincey.) He who works with eternity before His eyes must sometimes to

that eternity sacrifice the single moment of our earthly present, and for this we must trust Him.

XXIII

Prayer: A Blessed Life

FATHER of all mercies; let me do my work each day, and if the darkened hours of sorrow overtake me, may I not forget the strength that comforted me in the desolation of other times.

Spare me from bitterness and the sharp passions of unguarded moments. May I not forget that poverty and riches are of the spirit. Though the world know me not, may my thoughts and actions be such as shall keep me friendly with myself. Lift my eyes from the earth and let me not forget the uses of the stars.

Forbid that I should judge others lest I condemn myself. Let me not follow the clamor of the world, but walk calmly in my path. Give me a few friends who love me for what I am; and keep ever burning before my vagrant steps the kindly light of hope. And though age and infirmity overtake me, and I come not within sight of the castle of my dreams, teach me still to be thankful for life and for time's olden memories that are good and sweet, and may the evening's twilight find me gentle still. *Amen.*

Reading: It is Well that the Universe is Not Ordered According to Our Wishes

A LARGE part of modern pessimism is a rooted objection to two and two making four. I have just been reading a story in which Providence is arraigned because a mother neglects her child and it falls into the fire, and another in which the nature of things is said to be incorrigible because a deserving man loses his money. These writers demand that fire should be warm and cook but never burn and scorch; that water should quench thirst and float ships but not swamp or drown, . . . that the nature of things should be variable according to our whims and necessities. On the whole it seems to me more orderly and perhaps in the long run more comfortable, that two and two should make four than that they should make five or seven, according to the whim of an arbitrary Providence. As life goes on I have less and less time for mere railing against the fixed framework of the universe. It is hard stuff no doubt; but it's what we have to work upon, and there's no changing it.

XXIV

Prayer: For Loyalty to the Truth

ALMIGHTY God, who hast sent the Spirit of truth unto us to guide us unto all truth, so rule our lives by Thy power, that we may be truthful in word and deed and thought. O keep us, most merciful Saviour, with Thy gracious protection, that no fear or hope may ever make us false in act or speech. Cast out from us whatsoever loveth or maketh a lie, and bring us all unto the perfect freedom of Thy truth; through Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord. *Amen.*

Reading: The Life of Christ is the Supreme Life

IT is becoming harder than it once was to accept His life as one life among many, the change to a clearer issue is one that all who believe in Him may welcome. It cannot be truly known as life at all till it is known as the Supreme Life. If other lives will not be ruled by His life, they must presently seek to cast it out as an evil thing. Whereas they for the time prevail, they work perdi-

tion and destruction for a little hour, and then they perish while yet proving that life cannot be slighted or repudiated with impunity, whereas He prevails, He conquers that He may save. Could His life be banished from the life of men, the bright heathen life that once lived in ages long preceding His coming could live no more as it lived then. The ancient gods, the gods of the earth were not slain by the Nazarene. He destroyed nothing that had life; He lived that all which ever lived may live again in Him. No ancient form of life can perish forever, though it be long before mankind are fitted to receive it back at Christ's hand, renewed and transfigured by His resurrection.

As it is with the youth of mankind so it is with the youth of each and all. If the season is past when nature ministers life abundantly, yet He who died to nature that He might live to God has a saving power in store for every season. If He is sought . . . as Himself the Life, He will open up hidden springs of life in the desert within; and the deserts around that which remains of the threescore years and ten may be moulded into a living form, fair in His eyes and fit for His service.

XXV

Prayer: For Knowledge

FATHER of Lights, by whose hand the fires of the sun are fed, and who hast kindled in our hearts the desire to know, we bless Thee for leading us into a life wherein light and darkness are so wonderfully mingled. For the darkness and for the light we praise Thee. On our knees we would learn to think. Standing on our feet we would learn to pray. O Thou in whose being the simplicity and mystery of life do meet together, cleanse our prayers with the sanctity of reason, ennoble our reasonings with the majesty of prayer, and so bring us onward through darkness and through light, till in Thy presence and before our eyes the power that made the stars and the love that exalts our hearts shall kiss each other, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. *Amen.*

Reading: The Basis of Religion is Revelation, Not Mystery

RELIGION does not depend on the things we are ignorant of, but on the things we know. Its basis is revelation, not mystery; and it is not

affected by the fact that mysteries abound. Little as we know and much as we are ignorant of, our responsibility for what we know is unqualified. I do not think it is possible to overstate either the dimensions of our ignorance, or the urgency of our responsibility for acting up to what we know. There is always a temptation to let the first of these depress our interest in the second; ignorance—sometimes erected into a principle and designated agnosticism —falls like a heavy frost upon morality and religion. It takes the faith and virtue out of them. The most perplexed and baffled man, the man who has most certainly come to the limit of his insight, and who is most appalled by the opaqueness of the future, knows something; and it is on his action in view of that knowledge that his relation to God depends. He is not to be tested by what he does not understand in the infinite scheme of the universe, but by how he faces the responsibility imposed on him by what he knows.

XXVI

Prayer: For Increasing Strength

OUR Father, in Thy presence we will nourish our hearts and take a new song upon our lips. Whether we be in poverty or plenty, in power or

obscurity, whether we succeed or whether we fail, we desire to know that Thou art with us and all is well. Help us never to pass by human love, tenderness, friendship, and pity, and always to remember that our highest welfare is in the passionate desire for what is right, lovely, pure, just and noble. Lead us into a life of harmony and set our desires in order. Grant that we may pass from strength to strength, with light enough for each day's work, hope enough for every dark hour and friends enough to love. Put Thy Spirit within us that we may strive for the increase of knowledge and the spread of justice; that we may battle against evil and waste, choosing a short severe life rather than selling our souls to Mammon. Inspire us with great hopes, and through us achieve Thy holy will. *Amen.*

Reading: There is No Enemy of Growing Truth So Bitter as a Bigot

THERE is nothing so dangerous as narrow goodness. Sometimes it is more dangerous than open sin. For this narrow goodness generally persuades itself that its own form of goodness is the only possible. We must never forget that the Pharisees were good men, ready to suffer for their own ideas of God. Our modern picture of them, the wrong use of the word "Pharisee" is a foolish

and ignorant libel. These men served the religious life of their own day, and served it nobly.

But they were bigots for their own forms and their own narrow ideas of truth. There is no enemy of growing truth so bitter as a bigot. The Pharisees made up their minds that Christ's type of religion was really worse than sin. Sin at best was an open enemy, but Jesus was subtly undermining the whole edifice of God. They resolved that this man must be wrecked by fair means or foul.

It is certainly worth observing that Jesus was crucified not by men who were wicked, as we usually understand the term, but by men who were "good."

XXVII

Prayer: For a Sense of the Presence of God

ALMIGHTY and most merciful God; this earth is the dwelling place of Thy besetting Presence. Everywhere and always Thou art with us; but often we cannot discern Thee nor feel Thee to be near. The darkness and confusion of our hearts hide Thee from us and the struggle and burden of our lives make us forget. Recall us now, good Father, to ourselves and to Thee. Help us ever to cultivate and cherish the spirit which changes pain into patience and pity, temptation into a dis-

cipline of strength, and sorrow into joy. And when the fair dreams pass far away, and our mortal day is dark with storm, help us to live that we may pass through our trouble into a deeper peace; and through the cross of our sacrifice, into closer fellowship with Christ Jesus our Lord. *Amen.*

Reading: God Will Answer Him Who Sincerely Prays

OUR situation as strangers on the earth, requires us to seek communication with God. It demands and necessitates prayer. The presupposition to all prayer is that there is such a thing as a will of God, applicable to my situation, a Divine commandment bearing on the very circumstances in which I have to act, and by obeying which my exiled, uncertain life is united to the eternal life of God. Prayer is not always the presenting of defined petitions to God; we may not know what we need or even what we want—except that it is God. Prayer may be the effort of the soul, oppressed by the sense of its isolation, its impotence or its exile in the world, to connect itself again effectively with Him. It is not an attempt to lay down the law of God; it is the longing of the soul to be sure of the law which He has laid down for it. And this particular kind of prayer, in which the soul,

conscious of its darkness, its weakness, its incapacity to face life alone, cries to God in the pathetic, appealing tone of the Psalmist: "I am a stranger in the earth: hide not Thy commandments from me," —has a peculiar promise connected with it in Scripture. "Call unto me and I will answer thee and show thee the great and hidden things that thou knowest not." This is what we need—to have the Divine law which eludes us, made plain for our actual situation. It may be made plain to us, as to Jeremiah, to whom this promise was given, in marvels of providential wisdom and goodness, in great and hidden things that we know not: but it is in any case made plain, in answer to prayer.

XXVIII

Prayer: For Divine Teaching

O MY Lord, I need Thee to teach me day by day, according to each day's opportunities and needs. Give me that purity of conscience which alone can receive, which alone can improve Thy inspirations. My ears are dull, so that I cannot hear Thy voice. My eyes are dim so that I cannot see Thy tokens. Thou alone canst quicken my hearing, and purge my sight and renew my heart. Teach me to sit at Thy feet and to hear Thy word. *Amen.*

Reading: The Shadow of the Cross Must One Day Fall Upon Our Sweetest Garden

IN horror we watch the shades of death taking possession of our garden, and imparting to our lives the peculiar quality of pain and sacrifice. We think that all is over with the sweet fragrance of olden days, that nevermore again shall we know the fascinating charm of the earth. It may be so. To some extent it is so, doubtless. Yet the change is surely for the better. The touch of some great sorrow or sacrifice which life has demanded of us, may change the sheltered coward into a brave man who bears his heart exposed and unprotected in the open. It may change also the world of a man's ideals until he will be henceforth ashamed of mere selfish delight, however artistic, and will be ashamed to respond to the demand for assuagement of the world's sorrow and pain. Christ comes to all our gardens thus, invading and claiming them. We bring love and the open generous heart that tears down the gates of their exclusiveness and insists that we shall share our best with the disinherited. So for us, each one according to his experience, shall Christ replace our demand for selfish enjoyment with His greater ideals of sacrifice and redemption. We shall still have our secret places, nor will His presence banish any of the fairest elements of life;

but we shall no longer take up an attitude of spiritual selfishness towards any part of the outer world, seeking rather to share whatever gifts the garden may have brought us, with those whose poverty of spirit needs such gifts.

XXIX

Prayer: For Spiritual Guidance

LOVING Father, guide our thought, direct our way, send out light to meet us as we thirst and toil and blunder after it; draw out the good that is in us; help us to follow earnestly the better thing that goes before us, lovely as a phantom and as elusive. Lord, it is dark, very dark, but grant unto us light enough to show what to do next, the things waiting to be done, the things most worthy to be done. Let us give ourselves to do these, that something divine may be fulfilled in us, and we ourselves prepared for a new revelation. Let us endure the inevitable, and open our hearts to receive the moral uses of painful things and show forth a more hopeful spirit. May we learn more and more the greatness, the blessedness, the worth of life in living to obey Thy voice and to minister willingly of that which we have after the fashion of Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

Reading: Christianity Has Done Better Than If It Had Explained Suffering and Evil

CHRISTIANITY has not "explained" suffering and evil; no one has done so, no one can do so. . . . Yet Christianity has done two things with regard to suffering quite other than "explanation," yet two things, greater and more profound and profitable for us than ever could be such a satisfaction and our thirst for clear intellectual comprehension. Christianity has from the first immensely deepened and widened the fact, the reality, the awful potency and baffling mystery of sorrow, pain, sin, things which abide with man across the ages. And Christianity has, from the first, immensely increased the capacity, the wondrous search and force which issues in a practical, living, loving transcendence, utilization, transformation of sorrow and pain and even of sin. It is the literal fact that Christianity after some two centuries of the most terrific opposition, conquered the philosophy of Greece and the power of Rome. It reformed all Epicureanism, since man cannot find his deepest by flying from pain and suffering, . . . and it reformed all Stoicism, since pain, suffering, evil are not fancies and prejudices. Christianity thus gave to souls the faith and strength to grasp life's nettle.

XXX

Prayer: For Spiritual Growth

O LORD God, our Creator, by Thy will we came into being, and at Thy command, when the right hour is come, we shall one day leave this world. Thou alone knowest the holiness to which we might have attained, if from our earliest days we had always claimed the privilege of our sonship.

But, O Lord, we have not done so. We have not lived in the strength of Thy grace. Form us into Thine image more and more in the years that we have still to live. Mould us by Thine almighty power. Burn out of us all that is sinful and corrupt. As the grass and the flowers grow by the warmth of Thy sun and the showers of Thy rain, so let Thy Spirit work in our souls a holy growth that we may become well-pleasing in Thy sight. Every day may we increase in self-forgetfulness, in simplicity, in courage and in trust, and thus shall we every day approach nearer to Thy likeness. Make us, O God, true branches of Thee, the living Vine and to Thee be all the glory. *Amen.*

Reading: The Spiritual Man Should Take Advantage of the Law of Habit

THOUGH it be true that habits are formed and uprooted by the same process, namely, by a persevering repetition of acts; still if the habit be accordant to inclination it is quickly formed and very slowly uprooted. Contrariwise, if it be adverse to inclination it is hard to form and easy to lose. In the forming of difficult habits and in the uprooting of easy habits, perseverance does not mean infallibility and constancy, but is compatible with the absolutely certain previsions of many lapses and failures. It is the resolution to do one's best, and after each lapse to begin again with great faith in the psychological law by which the falls become fewer and more wide apart, till at last the intervals are measured by years, or even by a life-time. The ignorance of this law is a source of great discouragement. Men are simply astonished to find that they cannot change a habit by one strong revolution; and after two or three attempts, give up in bewilderment. Yet even on natural psychological principles it is not strange that it should take four or five years to eradicate all the germs of a disease contracted in a month or less.

XXXI

Prayer: For Health and Healing

ALMIGHTY God, who art the only source of health and healing, the spirit of calm and the central peace of the universe: grant to us, Thy children, such a consciousness of Thy indwelling presence as may give us utter confidence in Thee. In all pain and weariness and anxiety may we throw ourselves upon Thy besetting care, that knowing ourselves fenced about by Thy loving omnipotence, we may permit Thee to give us health and strength and peace; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

Reading: Faith Has a Double Movement—Concentration and Expansion

THE normal movement of faith is double, like the action of the valves of the heart. Our whole nature is ennobled and enhanced, as we try to follow the gleam, dimly perceived perhaps, but deeply believed in. And thus enrichment takes the double form of expansion and concentration. If we read the writings of the mystics, we shall find that nearly all the stress is laid on concentration.

We are to draw all things into one, detaching ourselves from whatever we cannot translate into a symbol of the divine. "Go not forth," they say to us: "return into thyself: in the inner man is the habitation of truth." This is indeed a lesson that we have to learn. We are not to be careful and troubled about many things, when one thing is needful. Prayer and meditation will teach us much that we cannot learn in any other way. If we cannot find God, it is perhaps because He is at home, while we are abroad; He is ready for us while we are too busy to attend to Him. Yes, this is half the truth, but only half. In Jacob's vision, the angels were not only climbing up the ladder, they were also coming down it. What does this mean? It means that we are not to run away from life even to find God, but that we are to come back with our treasure as soon as we have found it. Have we succeeded in finding God in the world? Then let us try to find the world in God.

XXXII

Prayer: For Spiritual Vision

O GOD, who art from everlasting to everlasting, we rejoice that through our fleeting days runs the strength of Thine eternal purpose. We praise

Thee that we are not the mere creatures of chance but that we came forth from Thee and that unto Thee we shall return. In the fulness of time the meaning and mystery of life will be made plain to us and the glory of Thy work in the world be revealed. Open our eyes to the vision of the eternal years that in that vision we may lose our restlessness and become partakers of Thy strength. Be Thou our strong fortress and our most strong tower unto death. *Amen.*

Reading: All the Moral Issues of Life Are Mental

THOUGHT is the great creator. The universe in all its imaginable glory rises at its bidding. Man shares in this creative power. He wrestles with chaos and wrings out of it order, beauty, a cosmos in which he is at home everywhere. The animal reacts to its environment and asks not the reason why, but man knocks at the gate of truth and will not be denied.

Thought creates character. All the moral issues of life are mental. Thoughts produce feelings; feelings issue in action; action repeated begets habit; habit creates character, and character spells destiny. How vital then is the relation of our thought to our welfare and happiness? Our thoughts affect

for weal or woe our bodily health. Take worry, for example. We all know what it means, futile regret over past sins, past follies, past mistakes; miserable foreboding about the future, the imagination arraying the unknown in colors that terrify and paralyze—the malign powers too often develop disorders of mind and body which make existence well-nigh intolerable. But if thought can induce sickness it can also create health. Think thoughts of joy and health and you will be joyful and healthful. Turn the mind to thoughts that are positive and constructive. Whatsoever things are true, honest, just, pure and lovely and these will inhibit the negative and harmful thoughts of the lower self. The noble and beautiful furnishing of the soul may be all summed up in that great word—"The Mind of Christ."

II

Morning and Evening Prayers

XXXIII

Prayer: A Morning Prayer for Strength

OUR Father, we would speak with Thee ere we enter on a new day with its new revelations of thy faithfulness, its new duties and responsibilities, its unknown joys and sorrows. We look to thee in faith. Grant us strength to do what lies nearest, and wisdom to guide us in the doing of it. Swiftly the days are passing from us. May we fill them with pure thoughts, kind words, and good deeds, that as they return at eventide into the eternities, they may not be to our condemnation but for Thine approval. In gladness may we not forget Thee, in difficulty and in doubt may we behold the Son of Man as our Example and our Hope. When the way is rough and our feet grow weary and our hearts faint, still may we cling to Thy promise and believe that rest will come when Thou seest we are ready to enter the Heavenly Home. *Amen.*

Reading: God Fails Not the Trusting Soul

WHEN a man is prepared in the heroic confidence of friendship to trust God, God will

not fail him. "God," it has been finely said, "will certainly not prove to be less than His creature's highest thoughts of Him." The moral qualities of God are not less to be depended upon than His natural laws. The man who will dare to trust Him will find Him true. Jesus Christ taught that when you find one man thus linked with God in mutual confidence and trust you have an altogether irresistible power. You have here, in fact, the supreme power in the universe—if, that is to say, it be true that the universe is at its heart a moral and not merely a natural constitution, not the supreme manifestation of the power of God. God is love and the man who dares, dares to believe utterly in God, has behind him the ultimate force of the invisible.

The limitations are not in God, they are in ourselves. The thought of Jesus Christ—that God is brooding over this unhappy world with a passion of love, with an infinitude of power,—if only He might find some man or woman who believes in that love, who is prepared to count upon it, that love and power would be released for the redemption of the world.

The universe is so constructed that the stars in their courses fight for the good man.

XXXIV

Prayer: An Evening Prayer for Divine Blessing

WE beseech Thee, Lord, to behold us with favor. Be patient still; suffer us yet awhile longer —with our broken purposes of good, with our idle endeavors against evil—suffer us awhile longer to endure and (if it may be) help us to do better. Bless to us our extraordinary mercies; if the day come when these must be taken, brace us to play the man under affliction.

Go with each of us to rest; if any wake, temper to them the dark hours of watching; and when the day returns, return to us, our sun and comforter, and call us up with morning faces and with morning hearts—eager to labor, eager to be happy, if happiness shall be our portion—and, if the day be marked for sorrow, strong to endure it. *Amen.*

Reading: To Enter the Silence of God is to Gain Spiritual Power

THERE are silences of human manufacture; the shallow silence of contempt, the troubled silence of shame, the chill silence of sin's conviction, the

dark silence of conscience when self-condemnation is ratified by Divine judgment. Some years ago a member of the Society of Friends wrote on the color of silence, and told of his experience of many hues. Sometimes it is buoyant with the joyousness of youth, and becomes the green springtime of hope. When men pledge themselves to noble service it may be tinged with the blood-red color of self-sacrifice. Sometimes it is golden with the harvest of glorious attainment when fidelity receives its sovereign reward. Then, again, it may be glistening white, when truth comes forth and manifests the secrets in the mind of God, quickening the hidden depths of the pure in heart to their own joyous vision.

Silence is something more than absence of sound. The silence we are seeking, if we attain it, will be found living, energetic, beneficent, keen with the breath of God, giving new resolution to distracted thought, new power to feeble purpose. No good work was ever done by a man who has not learned to be still. Silence rouses us to fresh endeavor in the true work of men who know that this world is but the school of a larger life which each may share in fellowship one with another in the unity of eternal life. Christ's refuge from the world was found in silence. He sought it during the long vigils of the night, when in communion with the Father He learned what the Divine Will called Him to do

or suffer, and nourished His soul with strength to do it. And His influence among men was most powerful when He refrained from speech that men might hear that which cannot be uttered. His opponents declared "Never man so spake." His friends knew that His silence was more eloquent.

XXXV

Prayer: A Morning Prayer for a Faithful and Compassionate Spirit

O SANCTIFYING God! Inspirer of great and saintly souls, who hast given us discernment of the Divine trust of life! Fill us with a true and faithful spirit, ashamed to sleep, while Thou lendest light for another duty, resolute to work Thy will, till all our strength be spent, prepared for cheerful rest when Thou wilt have us wait and be ready to depart. Never in the crush and storm of life, may we quench Thy sweet Spirit; but so cherish it that amid earthly and transitory things, it may fill us with the glow of heavenly affections and the light of tranquil faith. *Amen.*

Reading: We All Fail to Do What We Can

EVERY one is familiar with the phenomenon of feeling more or less alive on different days.

Every one knows on any given day that there are energies slumbering in him which the incitements of that day do not call forth, but which he might display if these were greater. Most of us feel as if a sort of cloud weighed down upon us, keeping us below our highest notch of clearness in discernment, sureness in reasoning, or firmness in deciding. Compared with what we ought to be, we are only half awake. Our fires are damped, our drafts are checked. We are making use of only a small part of our possible mental and physical resources. In some persons this sense of being cut off from their rightful resources is extreme, and we then get the formidable neurasthenic and psychasthenic conditions, with life grown into one tissue of impossibilities, that so many medical books describe.

Stating the thing broadly, the human individual thus lives usually far within his limits; he possesses powers of various sorts which he habitually fails to use. He energizes below his *maximum,* and he behaves below his *optimum.* In elementary faculty, in co-ordination, in power of inhibition and control, in every conceivable way, his life is contracted like the field of vision of an hysteric subject—but with less excuse, for the poor hysteric is diseased, while in the rest of us it is only an inveterate habit—the habit of inferiority to our full self—that is bad.

XXXVI

Prayer: An Evening Prayer for Divine Comfort

ABIDE with us, O Lord, this night, that the brightness of Thy love may be around us, and that the darkness be not dark. Abide with us, O Lord, this night, for in loneliness, we are not alone if Thou art nigh. Abide with the sick, the sorrowful, the forsaken and the weary, to strengthen, to comfort, to cheer, and to give rest. Shield us all from darkness of soul which seeth Thee not, that loneliness of heart which heareth not Thy voice. Abide with us through life, and in the valley of the shadow of death, forsake us not, but bid us be of good courage, for Thou art with us still. *Amen.*

Reading: Death is the Interpreter of Life

IT tells us better than any science or philosophy can, what life really is and ought to be. Have you ever been at death's door? Then did you not at such a time pass through the deepest experience of your life? Was not the truth of life clearer to you than before? Did you not see as in the light of the Judgment Day what was true and what was

false in your life? Did you not discover the meaning of life? . . . But if we had not faced death for ourselves, we have stood by the death bed of loved ones. It was an instructive hour beyond compare. The truth of life was revealed. The world faded from us. Life's big woes, life's bitter struggles, how they shrivelled into insignificance there! How could we grade the things of life according to their worth, were it not for that? Death is a hot fire which burns up the hay and stubble of vanity, and leaves the genuine gold of life purified. . . . At death no one doubts that the higher order is the true order. Therefore death is something great. Therefore death makes man great. We now know how to prepare for death. We now know how to stand before death unafraid.

XXXVII

Prayer: A Morning Prayer for Perseverance

FATHER, ere I go to meet the chances and changes of the day, I would commit my ways to Thee, for it is not in me to guide my steps. Whatever befalls only let me know that Thou art near and I will fear no evil and dare to believe in every good. Dwell within me as a power of cleansing and renewal. Let Thy light and Thy

truth, not my own darkness and error, speak to me. Purge away the dross of my life, and make me inwardly at one with goodness, truth and beauty. Abide with me as a spirit of perseverance so that however often I fall, through life's jar and fret, from the ideals inspired of Thee, I may rise up with unconquered will, to fight the good fight and by Thy gracious help at last to lay hold upon the crown of everlasting life. *Amen.*

Reading: None But Yourself Shall Meet You on the Highway of Fate

THE things that happen to us as we step along our path will prove friendly or unfriendly to our happiness just as we are inwardly qualified to make them. The good or the evil which may come through these things is not in the things themselves, but in the secret disposition of our own mind and will. Their effect upon us is determined by the manner and spirit in which we take them. It is always what a person has and is *within himself* that creates the elements of blessing for him in the events and circumstances with which he has to deal. And nothing is so effectual in creating the real elements of blessing as the sacred energies begotten in the soul, by reverent surrender to the spirit of God. We may be inclined to fret and complain that the

good of life is denied us, that our surroundings debar us from the satisfaction and the exhilaration we long to feel. But our fretting and complaining only aggravate the trouble. The imperative need is to cast ourselves on the Father above and get awakened in us that faith and hope which shall give us power to use circumstances for the highest ends and to convert our surroundings into help for the enrichment of our hearts. That is the true moral victory, and through Faith and Hope we create the conditions for winning it.

XXXVIII

Prayer: A Morning Prayer for the Spirit of Brotherly Love

OUR Father: Once more a new day lies before me. As I go out among men to do my work, touching the hands and lives of my fellows, make me a friend of all the world. Save me from blighting the fresh flower of any heart by the flare of sudden anger or secret hate. May I not bruise the rightful self-respect of any by contempt or malice. Help me to cheer the suffering by my sympathy, to freshen the drooping by my hopefulness and to strengthen in all the wholesome sense of worth and the joy of life. Grant that I may look all men in the face

with the eyes of a brother. If any one needs me make me ready to yield my help ungrudingly, unless higher duties claim me, and may I rejoice that I have it in me to be helpful to my fellow-men. *Amen.*

Reading: We Can Go to God Only with Others

HOW can we look around upon the people whom we habitually feel to be separated from us by almost impassable barriers; who are above us so that we cannot reach them, or so far beneath us that the slightest recognition of them is an act of gracious condescension; upon the people of an opposite faction to our own, whom we denounce as utterly evil; upon men whom we have reason to despise; upon the actual wrong-doers of society, those who have made themselves vile and are helping to make it vile —and then teach ourselves to think that in the very highest exercise of our lives these are associated with us; that when we pray we are praying for them and with them; that we cannot speak for ourselves without speaking for them; that if we do not carry their sins to the throne of God's grace, we do not carry our own; that all the good we hope to obtain there belongs to them just as much as to us, and that our claim to it is sure of being rejected, if it is not one which is valid for them also? Yet all this

is included in the word "Our." . . . What man of us—the aptest scholar of all—will venture to say that he has yet truly pronounced it; that his clearest utterances of it has not been broken and stammering? . . . How many pretexts have the most tolerant among us for intolerance! How skilful are the most religious for explaining away the awful command: "Judge not that ye be not judged!"

XXXIX

Prayer: An Evening Prayer For the Divine Blessing

FATHER of all mercies! Ere the day end we seek Thy blessing on whatever of worthy work and right purpose Thou hast enabled us to accomplish. Bring to nought the desires of our foolish and blinded hearts. If we have brought sadness upon any, help us to repent and to make amends. If others have wronged us, help us to lay aside all resentment and to forgive as we would be forgiven. In the darkness as in the light stay Thou with us and give us Thy sweet gift of sleep. Wake us in the morning, renewed in body and in mind, ready for Thy call to the tasks of another day: through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

READING: THE HIGHEST VIRTUE IS ENTHUSIASTIC

CHRIST demanded virtue of the enthusiastic kind; He prohibited evil desires as well as wrong acts. . . . This higher kind of goodness, though of course it had existed among the heathen natives, yet had never among them been sufficiently distinguished from the lower to receive a separate name. The earliest Christians felt a natural repugnance to describe the ardent, enthusiastic goodness at which they aimed, by the name of virtue. Regarding the ardor, they felt an express inspiration or spiritual presence of God within them, they borrowed from the language of religous worship a word for which our equivalent is "holy"; and the inspiring power they consistently called the Spirit of Holiness or the Holy Spirit. Accordingly while a virtuous man is one who controls and coerces the anarchic passions within him so as to conform his actions to law, a holy man is one in whom a passionate enthusiasm absorbs and annuls the anarchic passions altogether, so that no internal struggle takes place, and the lawful action is that which presents itself first, and seems the one most natural and most easy to be done.

XL

Prayer: A Morning Prayer for Life and Power and Love

THOU knowest, O Heavenly Father, the duties that lie before me this day, the dangers that may confront me, the sins that must beset me. Guide me, strengthen me, protect me. Give me Thy life in such abundance that I may this day hold my soul in Thy pure light. Give me Thy power that I may become a power for righteousness among my fellows. Give me Thy love, that all lesser things may have no attraction for me; that selfishness, impurity and falseness may drop away as dead desires, holding no meaning for me. Let me find Thy power, Thy love, Thy life in all mankind, and in the secret places of my own soul. *Amen.*

Reading: In the Absolute Love Alone Shall We Find Rest

TRUE being is union with the unchangeable, the infinite, the imperishable; with the all-creating, all-possessing Love whom we call God, and who, because He is absolute Love, is also absolute Life. How shall we creatures of a day attain this wondrous

end? We attain it by loving, by losing ourselves in love, by claiming our indestructible union with the eternal love within us, and living that love with act and speech among our brother-spirits here or elsewhere. That is to know God, to be His child, to live in Him. He that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him. And that is why Christ Jesus said: "He that drinketh of these waters (of all the waters Nature or humanity give us) shall thirst again; but the water that I shall give him (the water of God's being, unison with the absolute Love) shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life." There alone is satisfaction for us, children of the Infinite—in the union of our little fire of love with the eternal glow, we unite ourselves to Nature, by science, by art, by feeling: it is well we unite ourselves to humanity: it is well, but in the absolute love alone shall we find our rest.

XLI

Prayer: A Morning Prayer for Purity of Heart

O GOD, the King Eternal, who dividest the day from the darkness, and turnest the shadow of death into the morning; Drive far from us all wrong desires, incline our hearts to keep Thy law and

guide our feet into the way of peace; that having done Thy will with cheerfulness while it was day, we may, when the night comes, rejoice to give Thee thanks; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

Reading: All Our Ideals Are Revelations of God

WE know what we mean when we speak of God; the eternal perfection, the absolute goodness, truth, and beauty, whose light

> *"guides the nations, groping on their way,*
> *Stumbling and falling in disastrous night,*
> *Yet hoping ever for the Perfect Day."*

In this perfect life, all that our struggling ideals point to is forever realized; and every ideal of ours, —partial, fragmentary, imperfect though it may be —is a direct revelation of some aspect of absolute perfection, in whom all ideals are consummated. Thus do all the fates of human goodness begin and end in God, although men may not always see this, and may not always know who goes with them and guides their footsteps when, with earnest effort, they maintain the nobler way.

The only possible "proof" that the appeal which trust and love make to us, are literally *divine,* is found in *living* up to them so far as we are able.

If duty is divine there can be no way of "proving" it but through an experience which can be attained only by *living the life* of duty. . . . "Truth must be ground for every man by himself out of its husk, with such help as he can get, indeed, but not without stern labor of his own": and the deepest truths of life—the divine meaning of life's duties and ideals —can be won only in the work of life.

XLII

Prayer: An Evening Prayer for Pardon and Peace

O GOD, as this day closes, humbly I thank Thee for all that it has brought me; for its joys and also for its trials. Thou hast given me life and hast delivered me from many evils. Thou continuest daily to shower Thy mercies upon me. What return can I make for all Thy benefits?

Strengthen me, O God, that I may love Thee with all my heart, with all my soul and with all my might. Pardon, O Father, all my shortcomings and help me to overcome them. Grant me strength to forgive all who may have wronged me, and give me the courage to seek pardon of all whom I may have offended. O God, who neither sleepest nor slumberest, spread over me the shelter of Thy peace;

guard my home and all dear to me. May Thy blessing of peace rest upon all Thy children! *Amen.*

Reading: The Kingdom of God Exists—Whether We Forget It or Not

IT is one of the dangers of human life, amid its keen and varied interests to lose sight of one or other of the standing and primary realities by which it is surrounded, and which cannot be forgotten without loss and risk. The utilitarian forgets that there is such a thing as poetry and passion, and the mere sense of what is beautiful. The practical man cannot think how so much time is spent on literary training or abstract speculation; the thinker absorbed in a great philosophy, wonders at the fascination of politics or commerce. Yet all these things belong equally to the great facts of the world. . . . And so whether we forget it or not the Kingdom of God exists, exists not in books or theories, but in fact . . . exists after enduring everything that undermines and kills ideas and institutions. . . . If that which is best in us is not to be maimed or cramped, we have need to take full account of this as much as of the facts of nature and society. We shall be living, if we do not, in an imaginary and unreal world. We must meet the Kingdom of God. We find it here and we must meet it, either as friend or foe.

XLIII

Prayer: An Evening Prayer for Divine Support

O LORD, support us all the day long until the shadows lengthen and the evening comes, and the busy world is hushed; and the fever of life is over, and our work is done. Then in Thy great mercy grant us a safe lodging and a holy rest and peace at the last. *Amen.*

Reading: Moral and Spiritual Laws Are the Same in All Worlds

WHATEVER doubts we may entertain as to the range of physical law, there can be none as to the universality and permanence of those great moral and spiritual laws on which our existence and happiness as spiritual beings depend. Whatever else is local, truth and justice and goodness are common to all worlds; whatever else is transient, charity never faileth. To whatever mutations organic life may be subject, of this we may be sure, that the life of love and purity and goodness shall never in God's universe find a scene where it cannot flourish. Live for the world and the things of the world—

for pleasure, money, ease, comfort, earthly honor and enjoyment—and even here your happiness is at the mercy of a thousand accidents and you have not a shadow of security that that dread transition which is approaching will not dissipate your dream of enjoyment forever. But while the world passeth away and the lust thereof, there are things—holy thoughts, spiritual convictions, sweet affections, fine feelings, gentle charities, inward possessions and prerogatives of thought and spirit—which even here retain their preciousness through all the changes and losses of time, and which must from their very nature, survive the shock of dissolution and the transition that shall carry us away from all earthly things. You may suppose another or a hundred different worlds, but you can never suppose a world in which truth and benignity and self-sacrifice are no longer capable of existing, no longer the sources of supreme satisfaction and blessedness.

III

Special Occasions

SPECIAL OCCASIONS

XLIV

Prayer: Christmas Day

O GOD, my Father, looking up at the shining stars of the cold December sky I remember the patient mother and the rock-hewn manger in lowly Bethlehem where lay cradled Thy Love for the world. In the shadows of the silent stall I stand beside the Christ. Speak to my soul as I wait, I pray Thee. Let the trusting, loving spirit of the Child steal into my life until it calms all anxious fears and soothes all bitterness and pain.

In willing surrender and passionate longing let me take the Christchild to my heart, that henceforth I may live as He lived, love as He loved, and following His footsteps bring help to the needy, courage to the weak, comfort to the sorrowing, and hope to the lost. *Amen.*

Reading: Bethlehem and Golgothia

IN Bethlehem, aye, He was born,
Who came to bring us life and light,—
On Golgotha, He did not scorn,
Upon the Cross to break Death's might,—

I journeyed from the Western strand
To many a distant Eastern land,
Nor greater in the world I saw
Than Bethlehem and Golgotha!

O Thou, who in a manger poor,
Didst choose a helpless Babe to lie,
Didst shame and gain of Cross endure,
To take from us our pain thereby;
The manger seems too base to pride,
The haughty still the Cross deride,
While Virtues all with Meekness are,
In Bethlehem and Golgotha!

The Wise the Shepherd's star obeyed,
And Kings in adoration stood,
And many a pilgrimage they made
To kneel before the Holy Rood,
And such a storm of strife was born,
The world, yet not the Cross, was torn,
And East and West the conflict saw,
O'er Bethlehem and Golgotha!

O Heart, why fare to foreign land
His lowly cradle to adore,
Or, in wrapt wonderment to stand
By grave which holds Thy Lord no more?

That He in thee hath had His birth,
And that thou diest unto earth
And liv'st, to Him—this only,—ah,
In Bethlehem and Golgotha!

XLV

Prayer: Good Friday

O LORD Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today and forever; O Saviour of the ever-loving heart; we have grieved and wounded Thee. By our wilfulness, by our moral cowardice, by our thoughtlessness, by our self-seeking we share in crucifying Thee afresh. By the revelation Thou hast made of the eternal love help us to enter into the travail of Thy soul, and by loving self-sacrifice blend our wills with Thy will to bring all men to a knowledge of the Father. *Amen.*

Reading: Vicarious Penitence is a Saving Power

THE spirit that governed the life and death of Jesus was the spirit of love. Now, love involves sympathy, sympathy with those in trouble involves sacrifice, and *sympathy with those in sin*

demands vicarious penitence. An atonement for sin is necessary in the shape of something that will abolish it, by doing away with its effects and transforming the sinner. . . . How is vicarious penitence saving? It is by doing more perfectly what punishment does imperfectly; namely, destroying the sin-taste in the sinner by "showing up" sin and so producing such an intense realization of the nature of sin and goodness as must find outlet in action. This happens best in our experience when we come to see our sins through purer eyes than our own, and this is made possible by mutual affection. Thus when we see the trouble and suffering that our faults have brought on those whom we love, our eyes are most likely to be opened to a true understanding of spiritual values. Jesus went up to Jerusalem for the last time expecting and even courting death. The Kingdom of God was to be realized by a voluntary self-offering of one man on behalf of the people. At the same time the Crucifixion was a crime and a crime committed by those whom He was trying to help. It is He who is sinned against yet he . . . identifies Himself with His persecutors: "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do." Was sin ever "shown up" more luridly than here?

XLVI

Prayers: Easter-day

O THOU who makest the stars and turnest the shadow of death into the morning, on this day of days our hearts exult with heavenly joy. We praise Thee, our Lord and King, for the resurrection of the spring-time, for the everlasting hopes that rise within the human breast, and for the Gospel which has brought life and immortality to light. Receive our thanksgiving, reveal Thy presence and send forth into our hearts the Spirit of the Risen Christ. *Amen.*

BLESSED Christ, who in this glad and memorable day didst first fulfil Thy promise of Thy presence with Thine own, revealing Thyself as alive to those who mourned Thee as dead: Come to us now, find the secret way to all our hearts, lift the pierced hands in benediction over us, breathe upon us the peace that Thou alone canst give. *Amen.*

Reading: God Reverses the Verdict of Christ's Enemies

THE tragedy is finished.
A holy man has been wantonly and cruelly

done to death. Jesus of Nazareth has joined the glorious company of those who in the name of God defied the principalities and powers of evil, and fell a victim to His own delusion. As He hung upon the Cross meeting the inevitable fate of His own vast presumption, He appeared the heroic, the lovable but still the ineffectual Nazarene. But this judgment has not been final. . . . The belief in Christ's resurrection from the dead, and of His triumphant life at the right hand of God was the one ray of light that lit the pathway of the faithful through centuries of darkness, and the one creative force that inspired the builders of a new heaven and a new earth. . . . The doctrine of the resurrection is a shout of victory; a challenge to the powers of evil. How Jesus appeared and what He did and said are of little moment compared to the transcendant fact that by the impression He made upon His disciples He brought hope and immortality into the practical life of the world.

XLVII

Prayer: Whitsunday

O SEVEN-FOLD Spirit of God, come Thou into our dwelling-place this day and make Thine abode with us.

O Comforter, leave us not comfortless, but fill our sadness with Thine eternal joy.

O rushing, mighty Wind of God, stir up and quicken and cleanse us, and fill our souls with Thy breath of life.

O Flame of holy fire, burn up the evil that is in us, kindle our coldness, enlighten our darkness.

O Giver of holy Voices, reach us to speak to others in the language of their own hearts with the gifts of wisdom and understanding.

O Spirit of truth, guide us into all truth, that we may worship nothing lower than the Holiest One.

O Spirit of remembrance, keep in our hearts and minds the things of the Kingdom, that we may not forget and fall away from them.

O Dove of peace, descend upon us and abide with us now and evermore. *Amen.*

Reading: The God-filled Life Is the Only Efficient Life

WE touch God on one side and not on another. While these words are being written I passed from my study for a moment to another room in the house, passed from sunshine into comparative twilight, and from warmth into comparative cold. The transition is symbolic of the change we fre-

quently experience in passing from one side of a man's life to another. You touch him here and he is sunny with God's presence; you touch him there and you are struck with the chill of a cold night wind. If we were filled with the Spirit, if every room in this great temple of life was pervaded with heavenly light and heat, it would be possible to move from one room to another without any perceptible change of temperature. Life has many faculties and our trouble is that some are filled and some are unfilled with the Spirit of God. Sometimes the conscience is God-filled but not the affections. Sometimes the faculty of benevolence has the heavenly light but not the imagination. Sometimes the emotions are consecrated but not the reason and judgment. . . . It is the partial filling which is the peril of the spiritual life. We must become enswathed, enveloped in the Spirit. Open yourself up to the Infinite and you will put on strength and majesty like a robe!

XLVIII

Prayer: For the Last Day of the Year

ALMIGHTY God, who dost never change, grant that from Thine unchangeableness may come our fixedness; and as year by year passes away,

and the touch of change, and the shadow of the Valley of Death come upon us, ever in Thine unchanging wisdom and love may we find a refuge. May we abide with quiet heart, knowing that in life and in death we are ever within Thy loving care, leaving to Thee the things that are too high for us and the wisdom that is too deep for us, and looking forward fearlessly, blessing Thee that Thou givest us light enough for our day's work, hope enough for the night of darkness, life enough for love, until our great change comes; after which lead Thou us in the paths of eternal peace. We ask this through Jesus Christ and in His name. *Amen.*

Reading: "Every Man's Life is a Plan of God"

WE look back upon our life and feel that it has all followed a plan and a design; that the worst evils we have had to bear have been our faithless terrors about what should be; and then we feel the strength that ebbed from us drawing back to sustain us; we recognize that our present sufferings have never been unbearable; that there has always been some residue of hope; we read of how brave men have borne intolerable calamities and have smiled in the midst of them, at the reflection

that they have never been so hard as was anticipated; and then we are happy if we can determine that whatever comes, we will try to do our best in our small sphere; to live as truly and purely as we can, to practise courage and sincerity, to help our fellow-sufferers along, to guard innocence, to guide faltering feet, to encourage all the sweet and wholesome joys of life, to be loving, tender-hearted, generous, to lift up our hearts, not to be downcast and resentful because we do not understand everything at once, but humbly and gratefully read the scroll as it is unrolled.

IV

Special Duties and Circumstances

SPECIAL DUTIES AND CIRCUMSTANCES

XLIX

Prayer: A Preacher's Prayer

FATHER of lights! Fount of Wisdom and of Truth! Who am I that Thou shouldst call me to be an interpreter of Thy ways to men? I am unworthy of the least of all Thy gifts yet to this high place hast Thou summoned me and Thy word hast Thou put upon my lips. Illumine my mind that I may learn what I ought to think and speak concerning Thee. Open my heart to the wonder of Thy self-revelation in Him who dwelt among us full of grace and truth that I may tell of it to others with freedom and with power.

Never let me speak deceitfully for Thee but always let me remember that Thy truth forever wins the victory and needs no help from the cunning or the craft of man's devising. Grant me a discerning spirit, an honest heart and a sound judgment free from vanity and fear, that I may speak boldly, yet

with gentleness, whatever message Thou wilt give me; and so let me be to Thee as a hand to turn back the sinner from his sin, to smooth the path for the innocent, and to wipe away the tears of the sad and the sorrowing. *Amen.*

Reading: The Preacher's Power Springs from Fellowship with God and Sympathy with Man

THE possession of the life of God in his own soul and ability to communicate that life to others is the secret of the power of the preacher. He who has no such conscious life of God in Himself, or possessing such life, is not possessed by a passionate desire to communicate that life to others, has no place in the pulpit.

These two essential qualities of preaching are fellowship with God and sympathy with man. This is a power which has never waned and never will wane so long as God is the universal Father and man is His child. All other elements of power are aids to this spiritual life, but are valueless without it. The preacher may be a Roman Catholic Newman, or a Protestant Wesley, a college-trained Phillips Brooks or a self-trained D. L. Moody, a conservative Spurgeon or a progressive Henry Ward Beecher,—if he has Divine fire in himself and if

he has learned how to communicate that Divine fire to others, he will never be without power.

Preaching is interpreting the living God by one who has realized God's presence in nature, in human experience and in the Bible because he has realized that presence in his own soul. So to interpret an ever-present God as to interpret the spirit of obedience in lawless souls, and give peace to restless souls, hope to cynical souls and love to selfish souls, is to preach, and such preaching is never futile.

L

Prayer: A Merchant's Prayer

LORD Jesus, give us wisdom to understand and a will to obey Thy teaching concerning riches and poverty, buying and selling, and the conduct of business between man and man. Never let us forget that the order of industry is based on those spiritual principles Thou hast taught the world. Grant to the merchant, the producer, the employee, the consumer to know the laws of fair compensation and profit, and help us to realize that in all our business dealings we are called to serve our fellows, to bless them, not to injure them. Grant that we may never desire to take something for nothing, and when we give, may it be with thoughtfulness and

with due regard to the interests of the giver and the taker, so that those whom we serve may prosper in things spiritual and in things material. For Thy Name's sake. *Amen.*

Reading: The Business Life Can be Lived on Spiritual Principles

IF the higher life cannot be lived while undertaking the business necessary to carry on the material side of life, then Christianity is based upon a gigantic error. There is nothing "worldly" in doing the world's work. That is the ordinance of the universe and is intended to lead man to salvation perhaps somewhat more certainly than by what we usually call religious exercises. It may be carried on under wrong principles at present. But let us hold to the conviction that there is no final irreconcilability between the material and the spiritual side of life. This much-condemned commercialism of our times will, I believe, lead us to see the necessity of a communal religion that will be infinitely higher than anything dreamed of in the cloister. Any man engaged in modern business might keep before him as a hope;—that through all this the Kingdom of God is going to come. . . . Whatever is at present necessary must be borne; but never let your eyes wander from the ideal, nor excuse yourself for your failure.

LI

Prayer: A Boy's Prayer

OUR Father in Heaven, help us this day to tread the paths of righteousness, to follow after Jesus; to do nothing that we should be ashamed of afterwards. Help us to do unto others as we would have done to us. If we participate in any game, and sport, help us to play fairly. If by chance we slip from the strait and narrow path set us right again and keep us from evil. Let us do this day's work with a will and teach us, we pray Thee, to do the hardest thing first. Help us, O Lord, to keep Jesus in our minds; not to forget His sacrifice for us; and to try to do the things He would like. Keep us in good health this day, and protect us from any kind of danger. All these blessings we ask in the Name of Jesus. *Amen.*

Reading: A Friend Describes Charles Kingsley as a School-boy

OF him more than of most men who have become famous it may be said, "the boy was father of the man." The vehement spirit, the adventurous courage, the love of truth, the impatience of injus-

tice, the quick and tender sympathy, that distinguished the man's entrance on public life, were all in the boy; and there was, besides, the same eagerness in pursuit of physical knowledge, the same keen observation of the world around him, the same thoughtful temper of tracing facts to principles. For all his good qualities Charles was not popular as a school-boy. He knew too much and his mind was generally on a higher level than ours. Then, too, though strong and active, Charles was not expert at games. . . . He was very tender-hearted—often more so than his school-fellows could understand; and what they did not understand they were apt to ridicule. The moral quality that preëminently distinguished him as a boy, was the generosity with which he forgave offence. He was keenly sensitive to ridicule; nothing irritated him more, but with the moment of offence the memory of it passed away. He had no place for vindictiveness in his heart.

LII

Prayer: A Busy Housewife's Prayer

O LORD, this is all my desire,—to walk along the path of life Thou hast appointed me, in stedfastness of faith, in meekness of spirit, in loveliness of heart, in gentleness of love. And because

outward events have such power to scatter my thoughts and disturb the inward peace in which alone I can hear Thy Spirit, do Thou, gracious Lord, calm and settle my soul by that power which alone can bring all thoughts and desires into captivity to Thyself. Do Thou with all I have as seems best to Thee, for I know not what is best. Let not the cares or duties of this life press on me too heavily; but lighten my burden that I may follow in Thy way in quietness, filled with thankfulness for Thy mercy and rendering acceptable service unto Thee. *Amen.*

Reading: Of the Many Things We Would Like to Do, Only a Few Are Essential

LIFE is so short and time so fleeting that much which one would wish to do must fain be omitted. He is fortunate who perceives at a glance what it will do, and what it will not do, to omit. This invaluable faculty, if not possessed in a remarkable degree naturally, is susceptible of cultivation to a considerable extent. Let any one adopt the practice of reflecting every morning what must necessarily be done during the day, and then begin by doing the most important things first, leaving the others to take their chance of being done or left undone. In this way attention first to the things

of first importance soon acquires the almost irresistible force of habit, and becomes a rule of life. There is no rule more indispensable to success.

LIII

Prayer: In Time of Sickness

DEAR God in whom I live and move and have my being, I open my heart that Thy spirit may flow into me and through me into the lives of others; and that Thy power which works in me may make me sound and whole again.

O Eternal Fountain of all life and health, I thank Thee that Thou hast made me in Thy perfect image and that Thou art ever seeking to manifest Thy life in me as perfect health, that Thou mayest fulfil Thy purpose of love in me. I open myself to Thy healing power. O infinite Spirit of Christ within me, I seek Thy healing power. *Amen.*

Reading: The Soul Can Profit by the Suffering of the Body

SUFFERING that is merited is often a sharp reminder that saves and checks men on a downward path; suffering that is unmerited is an oppor-

tunity and a two-fold one—an opportunity to become like Christ and an opportunity to share His work. But it is an opportunity which is open to us to utilize or to let alone. There is where prayer helps most of all. This world is a world of lost opportunity and waste. Time, talent, money, life are constantly being squandered, but the worst waste of all is the waste of suffering. For suffering, when it does not elevate, degrades. Suffering is corrective, educative, and redemptive to those who love God from the beginning; in the second place, to those who as a result of the suffering of those—or to speak more strictly, as a result of the way in which those face and overcome their sufferings—are led to be come recruits in the great army of those who love God. . . . Even good men when not in their best moments will often say, "I did not deserve this." Bitterness and resentment for a time possess the soul. . . . But the best men in the best moments do not, when trouble comes, raise the question of merit and desert at all. They just accept the suffering as something to be faced, something to be overcome. "Who going through this vale of misery use it for a well, and the pools are filled with water."

V

Thanksgivings and Intercessions

THANKSGIVINGS AND INTERCESSIONS

LIV

Prayer: Thanksgiving for the Joys of Life

GOD of life, we thank Thee for a man's chance to live. For all the clean and wholesome joys of trained and disciplined bodies; for the ever abiding joys of trained and disciplined minds; for the friends whose strength and trueness add sunshine to the day, for all the happy memories of the past, the work and play of the present, the hope of fine achievements which irradiate the future, we give Thee hearty thanks. As we bow before Thee we would lift all these up in our hands and consecrate them whole-heartedly to Thy glory in the service of our fellows; not one talent unused, not one faculty undeveloped, not one opportunity neglected or grasped selfishly, but all devoted loyally to Thy will as we see it in Christ Jesus, to the growing of noble characters and the building up of a better world. *Amen.*

Reading: Regard Your Life as a Whole

THERE are times in every life when some present trouble or anxiety absorbs the soul, the sky is overcast, the horizon is narrowed, some cherished object is threatened or removed, or without any fault on our part we are entangled in circumstances that appear too hard for us. Nay even, when there is no exceptional trial or unusual fear, some passing trouble may often hide from us the evidence of Divine mercy and protection. We are in danger of becoming like those whom Dante heard in the Inferno: "Sullen were we in the sweet air that is gladdened by the sun, now we lie sullen here in the black mire." . . . There is no sin more easily besetting than the sin of unthankfulness. The remedy is the same to which the Psalmist had recourse: to consider the years that are past. . . .

If at some former time we have been turned from darkness to light and from the power of evil to good; if we can trace the hand of Providence in guarding us from dangers to which our ignorance or inexperience was exposed; or if at some critical moments our hearts have been lifted up into a conscious nearness to the Infinite Source of Being, let not these cardinal facts be obscured through some temporary irritation or distress, but let us dwell upon them in thought, let us try to contemplate our lives

each as a whole. The effect of such meditation can hardly fail to be an increase of spiritual depth and strength.

LV

Prayer: Thanksgiving for Faithful Witnesses to the Truth

FOR the faithful witness of all who have gone forth declaring the word of life; for the heroic souls of whom the world was not worthy; for those who for love of Christ were willing to lay down their lives for Him, we give Thee thanks and praise.

For preachers and evangelists who have declared His message with grace and power; for those who in times of darkness kept alight the lamp of faith; for great souls who saw visions of larger truth and dared to declare it; and for the testimony of the saints in all ages, we give Thee thanks and praise. *Amen.*

Reading: A Confession of Faith

I BELIEVE in the love of God through Jesus Christ.

I believe in the Cross of Calvary as the ground plan of the universe.

I believe in the transcendental meaning and hope of Life.

I believe that the true goods of life lie in the unseen, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God.

I believe that the real values of life are the good, the true, and the beautiful.

I believe in the salvability and immortality of every man, and in the infinite value of every living soul.

I believe in the practicability of the Kingdom of God, and in freedom to choose it and to work for it.

I believe in the sacramental quality of my day's work and that I may see and serve God in it.

I believe in a grace that can overcome my selfishness and pride, and that will enable me to overcome temptation, and upon which I need never call in vain.

I believe in love as the final law of life.

And in this faith, by the help of God, I mean to live this day and all my days.

LVI

Prayer: A Thanksgiving for Divine Mercies

O LORD our God, whose great glory is written all across Thy heavens, yet whose greatest glory

is to dwell in the lowly hearts of those who serve Thee here; Grant unto us Thine abiding presence, and give our souls Thy peace. When we consider Thy goodness and Thy majesty in all Thou hast made, our hearts are hushed before Thee, our souls bow down in silence in Thy presence, as Thou passest through our lives. We are as nothing, O God. In Thy great creation we are but wandering dust. And yet we thank Thee for Thy thought of us, for all Thy love shown to us in ways past finding out, for all Thy mercies which we can never reckon up. When we wander from Thy way, Thou dost not cast us off. Thy love goes out seeking us, recalling us from the waste, wild places where our soul is lost. Do Thou raise us up when we fall; give us the power to stand, and lend us the guiding light of the Cross of Thy dear Son, to lead us home where shadows are no more. For His sake. *Amen.*

Reading: God is Good as Men Understand The Word Good

FIX in your minds the one idea of an absolutely good God; good with all forms of goodness which you respect and love in man; good as you and I and every honest man, understand the plain word good. Slowly you will acquire that grand and all-illuminating idea, "slowly and most imper-

fectly at best"—for who is mortal man that he should conceive and comprehend the goodness of the infinitely good God. And see then whether in the light of that one idea all the old-fashioned Christian ideas about the relation of God to man; whether Providence, Prayer, Inspiration, Revelation, the Incarnation, the Passion and final triumph of the Son of God—whether all these, I say, do not seem to you not merely beautiful, not merely probable, but logical, rational and necesssary moral consequences from the one idea of an absolute and eternal goodness, the living Parent of the Universe.

LVII

Prayer: At the Close of the Year

WE give Thee humble and hearty thanks, O God, that the testimony of old is ours also. Surely goodness and mercy have folowed us all the days of our life. We thank Thee that our friends have not failed us, that love's light has not died down. We thank Thee that we have work to do and some reward and hearts who esteem us. For all that our friends have done for us during the year that is now nearly closed, we thank Thee. For all the good we have left undone, we ask Thy mercy. For all the beauty we have seen and all the sweetness

we have tasted, and for every new power that has been born in us we praise Thee and sing a song of exultation.

Guide us, O living God, on the upward path to larger responsibilities, to new truth and to richer experiences.

And now, as we approach another year, let us enter it with buoyant steps as into a land where happiness awaits us, and should sorrow be our portion, help us to find the blessing that lies hidden in its heart. *Amen.*

Reading: Life Is Not To Be Measured By Years

PROBABLY the most common reflection in men's minds at this season of the year is the thought of life's transitoriness, and as we grow older the change of date seems to occur with ever-increasing rapidity till it becomes almost minatory. But life transcends time. To measure it only by years is a convention. Its worth is not reckoned in that way. Moreover, if we think of life only in terms of our dealings with our fellow-men, we find it little else than a desperate venture in which we sooner or later forget its purpose. Life has higher ranges of service and achievement in a world of spiritual realities whose existence is assured by the experience of

all those who have trusted themselves to it. The full use of life is impossible to any man whose thoughts, aims, aspirations, and endeavors are confined to things temporal. At best he uses only a part of life and he is more than three parts dead.

Those who have the true conception of the fulness of life will not be less effective in the tasks which confront them in this world's business. It is no sign of spiritual vitality to neglect its demands on our time and strength. We shall deal with them all the more effectively not only because we hold them at their true value but also because we bring to them a new power which can put them to their proper use and guide them to the fulfilment of their proper end. If they are no longer the chief concern of our thoughts and efforts they will still be regarded as fixing the conditions which put our life to use in service to God and our fellows, means by which we attain the grace of an ever-developing life.

LVIII

Prayer: For International Goodwill

O THOU, who hast made of one blood all nations of men, help us to see the largeness and wisdom of Thy ways. Thou dost love all men and dost yearn to bring them into the fulness of Thine

own rich life. While we glory in the Christ whom Thou hast given us, preserve us, Heavenly Father, from spiritual arrogance and race pride. Open our eyes to the goodness and truth Thou hast revealed to others. Make us more like Christ who rejoiced in the faith of the Roman centurion and praised the noble deeds of the good Samaritan. Hasten the day when race pride and prejudice shall vanish from the earth and universal goodwill prevail. Forgive, O Lord, our narrowness, our selfishness, our pride and lead us into the fulness of Thine own infinite life. Make us in truth Thy children: through Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

READING: THE BROTHERHOOD OF THE WHOLE RACE IS DEMANDED BY THE FATHERHOOD OF GOD

THERE is a Father in the universe, who is in the closest conceivable relation to every soul that feels, to every spirit that breathes a desire for good. This is a bond which never can be broken and which assures the salvation of all from evil. Bound up with God, of necessity, is personal immortality, continued life and progress. Death is but a step in that progress, and in that belief its fear is conquered. Moreover the brotherhood of the whole race and the duties of brotherhood, are, in this common union of all with God the Father, secured and demanded. This double faith in the

Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man is bound up with Jesus, our brother, the man who declared it in the best way, whom therefore we accept as Master on the earth. . . . In Him the ideal of life among men was translated into work for man. And that ideal is this: Love one another even to death: love by giving up all you have and are for the service of your brothers; live to bless and not to injure men; then when love is perfect you will be at one with God. This is the ideal of man's life with man.

LIX

Prayer: For Mankind

O SPIRIT of Truth! May the way of life be lighted up for all mankind! Grant us not only to see and abhor the evil but to know how to overcome evil with good. Send us prophets and leaders who come not to destroy, but to fulfil. In the face of all confusion and error, fraud and violence, and of man's inhumanity to man, grant that we may never lose our faith that right makes might, that truth and love are stronger than falsehood and hate, and that this is Thy world throughout all generations. Let Thy name be our strong tower and rock of defence. In that name may we set up

our banners, and fight the good fight of faith and convert every defeat into a victory. *Amen.*

Reading: Man Is the Highest Representative of Deity on Earth

TERRIBLY imperfect as yet, because so recently evolved, he is nevertheless a being which has at length attained to consciousness and free-will, a being unable to be coerced by the whole force of the universe, against his will; a spark of the Divine Spirit, therefore, nevermore to be quenched. Open still to awful horrors, to agonies of remorse but to floods of joy also, he persists, and his destiny is largely in his own hands; he may proceed up or down, he may advance towards a magnificent ascendancy, he may recede towards depths of infamy. He is not coerced, he is guided and influenced, but he is free to choose. The evil and the good are necessary correlations; freedom to choose the one, invokes freedom to choose the other. . . . The Christian idea of God is not that of a Being outside the universe, above the struggles and advances, looking on and taking no part in the process, solely exalted, beneficent, self-determined and complete; no, it is also that of a God who loves, who yearns, who suffers, who enters into the storm and conflict, and is subject to conditions as the Soul of it all.

VI

In Memoriam

IN MEMORIAM

LX

Prayer: In Behalf of a Friend Who Has Passed Into the Unseen

O GOD, the God of spirit and of all flesh, in whose embrace all creatures live, in whatsoever world or condition they be, I beseech Thee for him whose name and dwelling-place and every need Thou knowest. Lord, vouchsafe him light and rest, peace and refreshment, joy and consolation, in Paradise, in the companionship of saints, in the presence of Christ, in the ample folds of Thy great love.

Grant that this life (so troubled here) may unfold itself in Thy sight, and find a sweet employment in the spacious fields of eternity. If he hath ever been hurt or maimed by any unhappy word or deed of mine, I pray Thee of Thy great pity to heal and restore Him, that he may serve Thee without hindrance. Tell him, O gracious Lord, if it may be, how much I love him and miss him and long to see him again; and, if there be ways in which he may come, vouchsafe him to me as a guide and guard, and grant me a sense of his nearness, in such degree as Thy laws permit.

If in aught I can minister to his peace, be pleased of Thy love to let this be; and mercifully keep me from every act which may deprive me of the sight of him as soon as our trial-time is over, or mar the fulness of our joy when the end of the days hath come. Pardon, O gracious Lord and Father, whatsoever is amiss in this my prayer, and let Thy will be done; for my will is blind and erring, but Thine is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

Reading: Death is a Birth Unto a New Life

THE only true counterpart to death is birth. Both are death to an old world, and life to a new. If there be a life after death, we may be sure that it is a real thing, that is to say, part of a general biological process—not a poetic, architectural or musical fantasy. We shall carry to that world all that we are—our knowledge, our thoughts and memories, our affections, our sense of humor, our virtues, our vices and our special aptitudes. It all seems wonderful and fairy-like to us now, just as foreign cities we visit in our travels seem so remote and unreal that we cannot imagine that their inhabitants lead commonplace lives like our own. This is only an illusion. When we enter that world

it will be to us the only reality, while this life will seem like a dream.

LXI

Prayer: For the Communion of Saints

OUR God, we thank Thee that to Thee there are no barriers between this world and the other; but that hand in hand, they who have passed on and they that remain may even now in prayer draw near to Thyself and to each other as unitedly and as naturally as little children round their mother's knee.

We thank Thee that in Thy presence all barriers break, all illusions dissolve, all accidents of time and space vanish away, all separation, all bereavement, is abolished in the exceeding glory of Thine audience chamber. Keep us all safe today in Thy spiritual city, both those that see Thee face to face, and we whose vision is yet dimmed by the flesh; give us all work to do, battles to fight, difficulties to overcome, and the joy of victory. *Amen.*

Reading: We Can Affect the Dead and the Dead Can Affect Us

OUR present total inability to know the circumstances under which departed souls live does

not affect our knowledge of their relation to God, and ours to them through Him. That knowledge is grounded on our knowledge of the character of God which is the revelation of Christianity; and it carries important and far-reaching implications as to the eternal relationship of souls to Him and to one another. Hence if we believe that God exists as Christ reveals Him, that men are related as Christ taught us we are, and that the self or soul or spirit —whatever we choose to call it—of each fellow-creature still consciously lives, we are impelled to consider our attitude, and indeed our duty to this great host of our fellows, and to our own beloved amongst them. If we and they and future generations are in some real sense parts of one organic community, their welfare is dependent upon ours and our welfare upon theirs. Science and history, even the last word of modern archaeology have been bringing home to us the unity of the race as it exists on earth more and more forcibly in practical ways. . . . If there is any actual communion between the dead and us as they make faster or slower progress in the knowledge of God, it is possible that they may help or hinder us.

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